



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



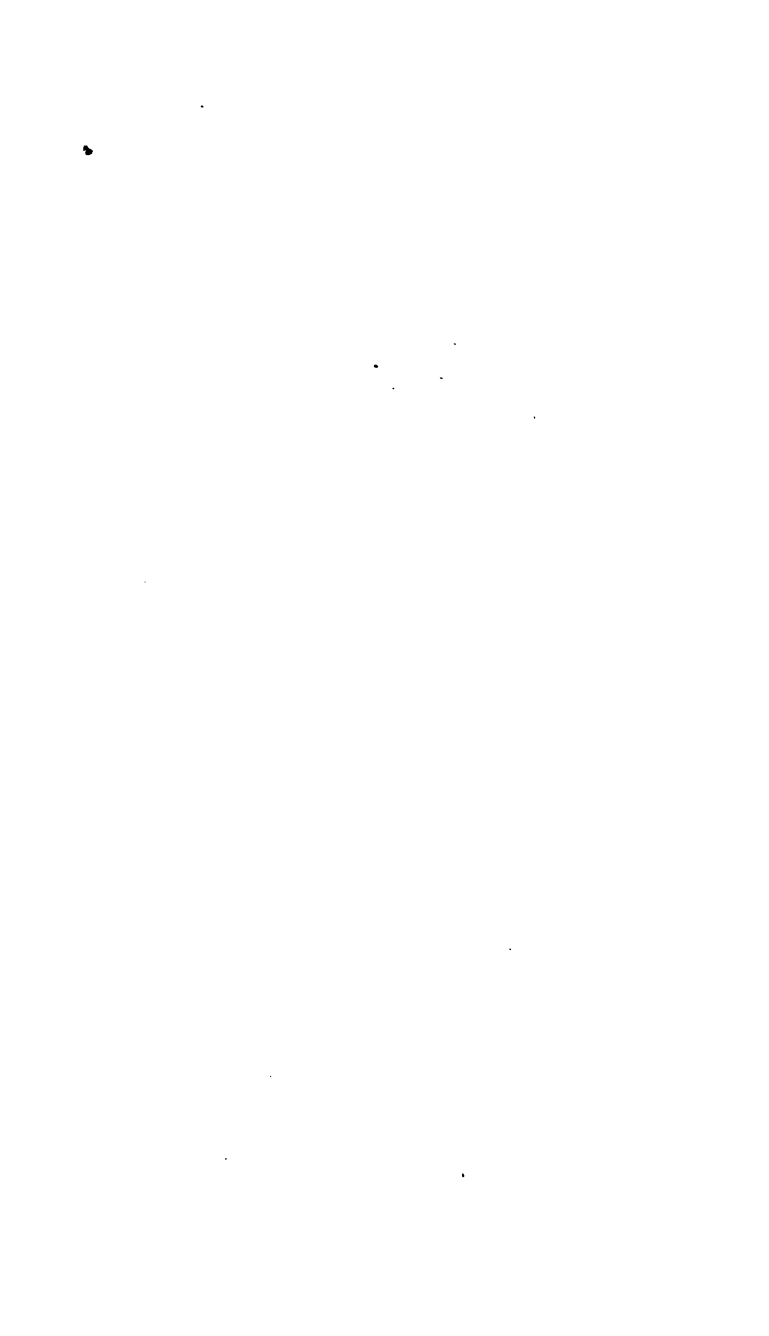
Thomas Farley. S.T.P.
1868

Liber apud Taunton scriptus
in Com. Somersetiae, eruditionis
praeantissima plenus.

6 H B

13650f 76





**CHRISTIAN
CATECHISM.**

WHEREIN

The principal Truths of Natural
RELIGION,

AND

The Truth and Divine

AUTHORITY

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

are asserted and proved, and the chief
Objections considered.

By way of **QUESTION** and **ANSWER.**

The whole being adapted to the Education
of Christian **YOUTH.**

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by *J. Noon* at the White Hart in Cheap-
side, *R. King*, at the Bible and Crown in Fore-street,
M. Fenner, at the Turk's Head in Grace Church-street,
W. Cooper, at the Globe in Pater-Noster-Row.

MDCCLIV.

BODL. LIB.

21 MAY 1948

OXFORD

THE PREFACE.



IF RELIGION, or the Fear of God and keeping his Commandments, be *essential to the Happiness* of Man; as it must be, unless Man be independent on God, and unless Man

can be happy without inward Rectitude, which is the Health of the Soul; then the *Principle of Self-preservation* obliges every Man to be Religious: And the *Principle of Benevolence* obliges every Man to promote Religion amongst his Fellow-creatures: And the *Principle of natural Affection* obliges Parents to try, above all Things, to plant and cultivate a Religious Disposition in the Minds of their Children.

Moreover, if CHRISTIANITY, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ, was designed, and *is every way fitted to make Men religious,*

iv *The* P R E F A C E.

and consequently to secure their Happiness, it must be the greatest and *best of Causes*; and each of the forementioned natural Principles bind Men to imbrace and propagate it.

The *Nature* of the Gospel, as a rational Institution, stating and inforcing all those Virtues and Duties which arise from our Relation to God and each other; and consequently the *Tendency* of the Gospel to improve the Mind, to perfect the Heart, to regulate the Life, to render Men amiable, useful, happy, shew it to have a divine Original; it has God's Image upon it, and must come from God; it is visibly the *Word of God*, delivered in *God's Name*, by that Prophet so long before spoken of in *Deut. xviii. 15,---19.*

If then true and eternal Happiness, or to acquire true and eternal Life, be the first great Dictate of Nature and Reason; *Religion*, so absolutely necessary to Happiness, must be a Dictate of Nature and Reason also: And if *Christianity* is the best Means to promote Religion, Reason dictates our imbracing it, and will condemn us if we reject it.

But besides this internal Evidence for Christianity, it has all the external Evidence

The P R E F A C E. ✓

dence a Man can reasonably desire. For, as Mr. *Locke* observes, * the Number, Variety and Greatness of the Miracles wrought for the Confirmation of the Doctrines delivered by Jesus Christ carry with them such strong Marks of an extraordinary divine Power, that the Truth of his Mission will stand firm and unquestionable, till one, *rising up in Opposition to him*, shall do greater Miracles than he or his Apostles did. This is one of the most palpable Truths and Trials, of which all Mankind are Judges; and there needs no Assistance of Learning, no deep Thought to come to a Certainty in it; such Care has God taken that no pretended Revelation, should stand in Competition with what is truly divine, that we need but open our Eyes to see and be sure which came from him. And to one who is perswaded that Jesus Christ was sent to be a King and Saviour, all his Commands become Principles; that *he said it*, is enough; he need but read the inspired Books to be instructed: And here I appeal, whether this be not the surest, safest and most effectual Way of Teaching; a Way which suits all Capacities,

* *Locke's Works*, Vol. I. p. 474, and 519.

vi. *The P R E F A C E.*

and which reaches, inlightens and sanctifies the highest.

Besides the Arguments for the Divine Original of Christianity, from the *Nature* and *Tendency* of it, from *Prophecies*, *Miracles*, and *Success*, which are considered in the following Tract; Let me add, That the Subsistence of the Jews as a distinct People, affords a peculiar Argument in its favour; the Circumstances of which People are so very singular, as to call for extraordinary Attention. All other Nations after a Conquest, and by Captivities, have lost their Religion, Laws, Name, distinct Being; while the *Jews* only preserve theirs. Had the *Jews* nationally received the Messiah, as the Scriptures of the Old Testament had not been fulfilled; so it would have been attended with this Consequence, that the *Jews* wou'd have been lost amongst the *Christians*, (as the *Athenians*, *Spartans*, *Saxons*, *Normans*, &c. are,) and we shou'd have wanted their distinct Testimony to the Authority of the antient Scriptures. But as they hate *Jesus Christ*, they are the most unexceptionable Witnesses to the Truth of Books, which contain such Predictions of *Christ and Christianity*. How amazing also is

it, that the *Jews*, who looked for the Messiah, and had such Marks to know him by, rejected him; while the *Gentiles*, who knew little of the sacred Prophecies received him! *

The *Jews* indeed, contrived a *worthless Greatness* for their Messiah, and dressed him up in external Pomp and Pageantry, acting with the poor Ambition of a *Cesar* or *Alexander*, laying waste Kingdoms, and making havock of Mankind. But how much more illustrious does he appear in his *real Character*, as the Author of universal Benevolence amongst Men, as refining our Passions, exalting our Natures, giving us vast Ideas of Immortality, and teaching us a Contempt of that little showy Grandeur, wherein the *Jews* made the Glory of their Messiah to consist. †

Further, it is an Argument (if not of the Truth and Goodness of Christianity, yet) of the Badness and Weakness of the Cause of Infidelity, that the Enemies of Christianity oppose it by Methods so *unfair*, and in a Manner so *abusive* and virulent.

Instances of their UNFAIRNESS are such as these. They constantly oppose Reve-

* See some Thoughts concerning Religion, printed 1734.

† *Spectat. Vol. 8. No. 610.*

lation to Reason; when as Revelation is not intended to supersede, but to awake and assist Reason in all religious Matters.--- They take it for granted, that God indued Man at first with Reason only, (or a Capacity of Reasoning) without communicating his Will by Revelations; tho' they never can prove this: And we can prove the contrary by Evidence they will never be able to overthrow.--- They oppose the positive Requirements of the Gospel, such as worshipping God thro' a Mediator, Baptism, and the Lord's-Supper, to moral and divine Virtue; whereas these are only such Mediums, Memorials and Signs as are a great Help to begin, increase, and perfect Virtue, amongst sinful Beings, dwelling in Flesh.--- They urge, that Miracles may be wrought by evil Spirits; but dare not attempt to prove that *such* Miracles as Jesus Christ and his Apostles wrought, in such *Circumstances*, and for such *Ends*, ever were, or can be wrought by evil Spirits, or by any but a divine Power.--- They urge also that Miracles are only a *Proof of Power*, but have no Relation to the Truth of Doctrines: But uncontrouled Miracles, if they prove the Interposition *of divine Power*, they prove enough, for
they

The P R E F A C E. ix

they prove a Mission from God, or Authority to preach certain Doctrines; and consequently prove the Truth of the Doctrines; for God will send none to preach Falshood: Besides, none of Christ's Miracles are Instances of mere Power, but of Wisdom and Goodness also. *---They suppose

* I am sorry to see Men, who profess Faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in the Prediction and Promise of his second Coming to judge the World; and who have well explain'd some Christian Doctrines, employ their Pen in the Service of Infidelity; by an Attempt to render suspected the Force of Evidence arising from *Miracles*. How much more becoming their rational, social and christian Character wou'd it have been to illustrate and shew the Validity of that Evidence; in regard the Gospel of Jesus Christ is, on all Hands, allowed to be an Institution every way fitted to enlarge Men's Knowledge, and to advance every Branch of Religion and Virtue, and consequently to promote the Happiness of the Human Race! Wou'd it not have been a surer Mark of a generous and benevolent Mind to have taken the *laudable Pains* of recommending this divine Institution to the Study and Practice of Men; than the *wretched Pains* of endeavouring to lessen Mens Regard for it, by trying to weaken one of the Foundations on which the Credit of its divine Original standeth? Can a Lover of God, can a Lover of Mankind, can a Friend to the Virtue and Happiness of Mankind act at this rate?

As to the Merits of the Cause; suppose *Miracles* a Proof or Sign only of *Power*; if they are Proof of Supreme, governing Power interposing, does not this amount to a divine Attestation? But moreover, the Miracles of *Moses*, of the Prophet, of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles are Proofs of Power directed by *Wisdom* and *Goodness*; and to constitute a full Proof of a divine Attestation.

x *The* P R E F A C E.

suppose and allow the Truth of the Scripture History, when they imagine it furnishes any Matter for Cavil or Ridicule; but call it into question where it records Facts which confound them and their Cause.---Sometimes they deny or quibble away uncontestible Facts; at other times deny

And suppose evil Spirits have Power, if permitted, to work Miracles, and have wrought some (which the Author I refer to * has, upon his Principles, no Right to suppose) yet are there any Grounds at all to suspect that the Miracles of *Moses*, and of Jesus Christ were wrought by evil Spirits? And ought such a Suspicion to be conceived or suggested without Grounds? Can a wise, a just, a good Man be guilty of it?

Let me ask, Is it consistent with the Wisdom and Goodness of the great Ruler of the Universe to suffer Men from Generation to Generation to be perpetually and necessarily imposed upon in their everlasting Affairs, without any Remedy?

If Jesus Christ was an Impostor (tremble Reader, at the Thought) and his Works were wrought by the Agency of Satan, wou'd God give no Light by which to discover the Imposture? Wou'd Christ and his Cause, without either divine or humane Aid, have succeeded so soon, and prospered so long? Wou'd it always have been opposed by wicked Spirits and wicked Men? Is Satan thus at odds with himself? Or, is he changed into a Saint, and devoted to propagate the most holy, wise and benevolent Institution the World was ever blessed with? Has the World thus shifted Sides, that all good Men are listed under Satan in support of the Gospel; and all bad Men under God and Truth to oppose it? In a word, was the *Life* of Christ like that of an incarnate Devil? Does Satan go about doing Good? Were the *Works* of Christ like those Works of the Devil he came to destroy?

deny the Evidence arising from them.-----
 They shut their Eyes upon the innumerable inimitable Beauties and Perfections of the Holy Scriptures; while they feed their vicious Fancies, and depraved Tastes with those Imperfections which arise from wrong Translations, or from Antiquity of Language and Custom, for which their ungenerous Disposition makes no Allowances. --They argue against Christianity from the Additions Men have made to it, and their Abuses of it; as also from the immoral Lives of false Christians. A Way of arguing allowed of in no Cause.---It is also a notorious Instance of *Unfairness*, that they never agree in their Charge against Christianity; but shift from *Imposture* to *Enthusiasm*, and back again, as serves their

stroy? Or is the Gospel, those Words of Christ, the *Words of him who hath a Devil?*

Miracles serving to detect Falshood, discover Deception, to restore just Sentiments and Ideas of God's once disputed Sovereignty, to give a most conspicuous Display of his adorable Character, and of his constant, unerring and kind Providence — answer a noble End, and are worthy of God. And when we have all needful, not to say all possible, Demonstration of the Agency of a good Being; an Attempt, against *positive Evidence* to the contrary, to shew the bare Possibility of the Agency of an evil Being, seems injurious to the Character of God, to the Scriptures of Truth, to the best interests of Mankind, and is as unworthy and shameful a Part as a Man can well act.

prefer

present Turn; tho' these are contrary Charges, and cannot be both true.

As to Falshoods, impudent Misrepresentations, shameful Scurrilities, base and unmanly Language, I need only refer to those two late scandalous Writers *Woolston* and *Morgan*. The vile and infamous Methods such Men have taken is a strong Presumption of the Badness of the Cause; and of the Truth and Goodness of that which they Oppose.

But cou'd the Enemies of Christ and Christianity possibly succeed in their wretched Cause, in opposing an Interest at the Head of which God stands, which almighty Power and Omniscience has so visibly supported, and which will certainly out-live all Opposition: Cou'd they succeed against an Interest which baffled and confounded their Brethren, the *Jewish* Priests and Doctors, *Annas* and *Caiphas*, who had better Advantages than they for detecting a Fraud in Christianity, had any one belonged to it, and as strong Inclination to it. Let me ask

1. What wou'd they *themselves* be *Gainers* by their Success? Can they here-
by change the Nature of *Sin*, dethrone
GOD, mortalize their Souls, defy Death,

escape *Judgment*? Will overthrowing the Gospel render them safe in a sinful life? On the other hand, if the Bible is the best Help to see the Folly and Turpitude of Sin, and to resist Temptations to it; if it be the best Help to know and serve God; to improve their own Souls, to prepare for avoidable Death, and to appear approv'd at Judgment; then let them reserve their Merrillity and Ridicule for a more proper Object than the Bible. For unless they can find a better Means to improve their Understandings, to enoble their Minds, to govern their Passions, to perfect their Virtues, to correct and adorn their Lives, to quiet their Consciences, to cheer and support their Spirits; they will, for rejecting and aspersing the Bible, be justly condemn'd of God as *Enemies to themselves*, or as self-destroyers. Let me ask

2. What will *the World be Gainers* by their Success in this dreadful Cause? When they have expelled Christianity out of the world, and banished the Gospel, were it possible; will their Children be better trained up? Will their Sons and Daughters carry it with more Obedience, Sobriety and Chastity? When let loose from the *restraints of the Gospel*, will Husbands

B and

and Wives be more true and faithful to each other? Will Mens Virtue, Reputation, Lives, Purfes be more safe, by removing the Hopes and Fears of a future State, as revealed in the Gospel? By this Method will moral Truth and Righteousness more prevail? Will more exalted Degrees of Justice, Benevolence and Charity be the Glory of Societies? When Men have laid aside their Bibles, and ceased from hearing or reading the Word, will *Conscience* be more awake, vigilant and operative; will it more effectually check every ill Action, and be a more powerful Spring of good Actions?

On the other Hand, if the Reverse of all this be probable and Fact; and if generally the farther Men go in opposing Christ and Christianity, the more they run into Vileness and Debauchery, and spread farther the fatal Infection; then these Opposers of Christ and his Religion will be justly condemn'd by God as *Enemies to Mankind*. Let me ask

3. What *Glory will God gain* by Success in their Opposition to Christ? Will God's, or Satan's Kingdom grow by *parting with our Bibles*? If Christ sought the *Father's Glory*; whose Glory do his Opposers

posers seek? If Christ was an Agent sent from Heaven, whose Agents are they who mal-treat, and abuse him? If Christ spoke the *Words of God*; whose Words do these his Adversaries speak? If *his* werenot, *theirs* must be the Words of Men influenced by the Devil. Will God be better *known*, better *worshipped*, better *obeyed*, when Men have cast away their Bibles, deserted the Houses of God, and laid the Lord's Day level with other Days? If not, then let the Opposers of Christ and Christianity look to it, lest they be condemn'd as *Enemies to God*, as well as to Themselves and to Mankind.

Those who wou'd expell Christianity out of the World, wou'd, if able, I am afraid, expell *all Religion* out of the World; and consequently wou'd, if able, expell GOD out of the World, out of his own World; for if we have nothing to do with God, - he has nothing to do with us.

It is to give some Check to this dreadful Delusion; these wicked, and, upon the whole, impotent Attempts, that I have drawn up this Catechism; wherein I have collected the principal Arguments for *natural* and *revealed*, for *real* and *instrumental Religion* into as narrow a Compass, and

xvi *The* P R E F A C E.

represented them in as clear and strong Manner as I am able; that hereby I might fit it for the Service of *young People*; and render it a useful Instrument of Education in the Hands of Parents.

For I cannot but judge that the best *ternal Preservative* of Youth from the Attacks of Infidels, is a strong, habitual, serious Belief of the Truths of natural Religion; namely, The Being of God, His Providence over the World, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State. The Bible giveth Men so grand, affecting, and amiable Descriptions of God; is so instructive an Illustration of his Providence; leads Men to so just a Care of their Souls; and is so excellent a Preparative for a future State; that I am ready to think, no Man who believes in God, who has a just Sense of his Presence, who believes his Soul immortal, and who wou'd fain be ready for Death and Judgment, can possibly neglect, much less despise the Bible.---This is therefore the best Method to secure your Peoples Adherence to Christ and Christianity, is to give them a clear View of the Principles of natural Religion; and strongly to impress upon their Minds a serious *lively Sense* of God and his Providence.

of the Worth and Duration of their Souls, the Approach of Death, and the Awfulness of a future Judgment.

Nor can we ever hope to see real Religion grow, and Christianity flourish, and the World hereby reformed, till YOUTH become more the Object of our Concern and Care. The Passion of most Parents (I fear, even amongst Christians, tho' in direct Contradiction to the Life, Spirit, and Law of Christ) is to see their Children fine and rich: In consequence of which, most Christian Children are trained up in the same poor and low Passions; and are early taught to pursue the Riches, Gaities and Pleasures of the World as chief Goods. By such an Education Parents do as effectually keep their Children from becoming good Christians, as if they instructed them in the Principles of Irreligion, and taught them to believe they had no Souls, or none which deserved half the Care their Bodies do.

Even in some better Families, where the Principles of Religion are taught; yet this is mingled with the Sight of so much Eagerness after the World, and such a Fondness for *Dress, and Pleasure*; that it is a *great Question* which will gain the Ascer

xviii **The P R E F A C E.**

dancy in the Hearts of their Children; the Principles of Wisdom and Maxims of Piety coldly taught them; or the Principles of Worldliness, Vanity and Folly, by stated Examples, strongly impressed upon them.

So that I cannot but ascribe the little true practical Religion there is in the World, and the Prevalency of ill Principles, very much to a *wrong Education*; nor do I see at present much Ground to expect a general Amendment. But I venture this Piece abroad as one Help, amongst many, in the important Work of *Education* *; which, if well executed, in Families, in Boarding-Schools, in Colleges, and Churches, wou'd tend, perhaps, more than any one Expedient besides, to revive Religion and Virtue, and to restore the Happiness and Glory of our Land.

But while Parents, Tutors and Tutoreesses train up Children and Youth almost wholly, if not altogether, in the Maxims and Fashions of this World, in contradiction to the great and only Design of the Gospel; this at once knocks down all our Sermons, and defeats the End of all Gospel Preaching.

* See the Importance of a religious Education briefly represented in the *Preface* to a former set of Catechisms, intended *for Children and young People*.

THE Christian Catechism, &c.

CHAP. I.

*The Existence and Perfections of God
proved.*

SECT. I.

Q.



IF there is a God, and a Providence; if the Soul is immortal; and there will be a future Judgment, then what plainly follows?

A. That *Religion* is every Man's chief Business. *

Q. What is *Religion*?

A. Such an habitual Reverence for God, and Love to him, as powerfully incline us to worship him and keep all his Commands.

* Thy Force alone, RELIGION! Death disarms,
Breaks all his Darts, and every Terror charms.
We undismay'd his awful Power obey;
THOU guides us thro' the safe, tho' gloomy Way,
Which leads to Life, and to the blest Abode,
Where ravish'd Minds enjoy, what here they own'd, a God.

Blackmore on the Creat. B. IV.

Deut.

*Deut. vi. 29. O that there were such an Heart in them, that they wou'd fear me and keep all my Commandments always, &c. **

Q. Who is God?

A. God is an infinitely wise, powerful, good Being, who exists necessarily, and has all Perfections and all Dominion absolutely in and of himself, underived and independent on any.

Q. Can we prove the Being of a God from the Testimony of the Scripture? *A.* No.

Q. Why can we not? *A.* Because the Scriptures suppose a God, but do not prove him to be; and they are wrote only for those who already believe in him; we must also be-

* By *Religion*, I mean such a Sense of divine Truth as enters into a Man, and becomes the Spring of a new Nature within him, reforming his Thoughts and Designs, purifying his Heart, sanctifying and governing his whole Deportment, animating him with a Zeal to be still better and better; using Prayer and all outward Devotions, as *solemn Acts testifying* what he is inwardly and at Heart; and as *Methods* instituted of God, to be still advancing in the use of them farther and farther into a more refined and spiritual Sense of divine Matters.

Barnet's Hist. of his Life. Vol. II. p. 668.

Hoc vinculo. Pietatis obstricti, Deo religati sumus; unde ipsa Religio nomen accipit.

Lactant. L. 4. c. 28.

Meo judicio Pietas est fundamentum omnium Virtutum.

Cic. pro Planc.

Pietate adversus Deos sublatâ, fides etiam & Societas humani generis, & una excellentissima virtus, justitia tollatur necesse est.

*Cic. de Nat. Deor. L. 1.
liex*

The Christian Catechism. 21

Q. That God *is*, before we believe that he
or operates.

Q. But does not the Scriptures direct us
to prove there is a God. *A.* Yes.

Q. How? *A.* From the Make and Frame
the visible World. *

*Psalm xix. 1, 2. The Heavens declare the Glory of God.
x. 12. Chap. li. 15. He hath made the Earth by his
Power, established the World by his Wisdom, and stretched
out the Heavens by his Understanding, that is, the Power,
Wisdom, and Knowledge of God are evidently seen in the
Frame of the Heavens and Earth. Acts xiv. 15, 17. He
hath not left himself without Witness, in that he did good
unto us, and to all Men, inasmuch as he hath given us
Life, and we are all his Off-spring. Rom. i. 20. The
invisible Things of him from the Creation of the World are
clearly seen, being understood by the Things which are made, his
eternal Power and Godhead.*



S E C T. II.

Proofs of a God drawn from the Effects to the Cause.

I. Q. **D**OES the Being and Building of this World prove there is a God who built it? A. Yes.

Q. Is not this as plain and evident as that every House has a Builder? A. Yes. Heb. iii. 4. *For every House is builded by some Man; but he who built all Things is God*.*

Q. Are there not evident Characters of Design, Wisdom and Goodness in the Frame of the World and all its Parts? A. Yes. †

Q. And

* The three following Propositions may be reckoned *Posulata*, or Concessions in the Argument for Religion.

1. That it is very desirable to every reasonable Spirit, that there shou'd be a God; that is, a great, wise and good King and Governor over the World.

2. That scoffing at Religion, or at acknowledging and worshipping God, is very inexcusable.

3. That the Practise of Virtue is necessary to human Society, and tends to render a Man perfect and lovely. That without Truth, Justice, Charity, Kindness, Society wou'd be dissolved, and Men be degraded below Brutes. Therefore it is highly probable, that the only Causes of Atheism are *Ignorance* or *Viciousness*, or *false Philosophy* and partial Reasoning.

† There are Six Methods of proving the Existence of the Deity.

1. *That all which Exists cannot be contingent; but there must be some Being which necessarily exists of it self.*

2. *That*

The Christian Catechism. 23

And is there not an evident Incapacity in dead Matter to move itself continually in so regular a Manner, and to put forth such beautiful Forms, in which it appears several Parts of the Universe? A. Yes. Must there not then be a designing, wise and good Creator and Governor of the World, and of every Part of it? A. Yes.

If we but open our Eyes, does not *one* only discover Him, who has drawn him- self in all his Works? A. Yes.

If a Book, an Organ, a Statue, a Picture striking the Passions of the Heart, as well as the Shape and Colour of the Face, display an intelligent, designing Author; does not the visible World and every Creature in

it, shew that we cannot admit of an infinite Number of Causes successively subordinate; and that it is absolutely necessary to suppose a first Cause, on which all others are depen-

dent? That Matter cannot move itself, but that a first mover must necessarily exist; from whom mediately or immediately it received its moving Impulse.

That in those Beings which exist, there appearing several Degrees of Perfection, as Goodness, Beauty, Power, there must necessarily exist a Being supremely perfect, in respect to which they may be said to be more or less perfect in Proportion to their approaching more or less to his Perfection.

That drawn from the Structure of the Universe, and the Manner of its Subsistence in such an excellent Order in all its Parts, and with such a constant Regularity of their Motions. *artefus's* Proof from the Idea of a necessarily existing Being.

Bayle's Dict. Vol. IV. p. 3065.
Cudworth's Intell. System.

it,

24 *The Christian Catechism.*

it, as plainly discover its great Author? A. Yes

Q. When *every Object* offers God to our Sight, is it not strange any Men shou'd pretend to see him *no where*? A. Yes.

Q. And if we see him in all his Works, is it not highly fit we shou'd admire, love and worship him? A. Yes.

Q. If Veneration is due and paid to Men who make Statues without Reason and Motion; is not an infinite Veneration due to Him who produceth Men indued with Reason Speech, and self-moving Powers? A. Yes

Q. If all Parts of the Universe, and every Creature in it are useful, and answer some End; is it not reasonable to ascribe them to a designing and good Creator, who foresaw both the End and the Means? A. Yes*.

Q. Is any thing more desirable than that there be a God to govern the World? A. No

Q. Or, is any Meditation more delightful
A. No †.

Q. Ar

- * For to design an End, and to pursue
That End by Means, and have it still in View,
Demands a conscious, wise, reflecting Cause,
Which freely moves, and acts by Reason's Laws:
Which can deliberate, Means select and find
Their due Connection with the End design'd.

Blackmore on the Creation B. 1

- † Since Man is born to so much Woe and Care,
Must still new Terrors dread, new Sorrows bear;
Does it not suit the State of Human kind,
There shou'd preside a good, almighty Mind?

W

The Christian Catechism. 25

Are not then Atheists, who say there
God, Enemies to themselves, and to the
e and happiness of Mankind? A. Yes.
What particu'ar Branches may be com-
ided under this first great plain and ge-
Proof of the Being of God? A. The
sters of Design, Wisdom, Power, Good-
which appear in the *Earth*, the *Water*,
ir, the *Heavens*, in *Animals*, in *Man*,
n his *Body* and *Soul*.

Q. What Characters of Design, Wis-
Power and Goodness are visible in the
of the EARTH? A. The Earth, tho'
ns, like a Ball, in the Air, is so equally
, that one side does not outweigh the

Its *Temperature* is just; not so *hard*,
opens its Bosom to the Plough; nor so
s not to be trod on. It is *variegated*
useful and ornamental Hills and Vallies,
a inexhaustible *Storehouse* of Minerals;
Seeds of Trees, Flowers and Grass. It
wears out, but grows young again every
, by a surprizing Resurrection of Plants
sorts. It assumes an infinite *Variety* of
, and is changed into a thousand fine-
es, Shapes and Colours, to charm the
to regale every Sense, and to support

ho, when implor'd, might timely Succour give,
ace our Anguish, and our Wants relieve;
ther of Comfort might our Souls sustain,
hen prest with Grief, and mitigate our Pain.

B. V.
the

the Life of Man. Trees of stately, awful Height and Bulk grow out of her, which by small Pipes draw out of her Juices, which are converted into Bark, Wood, Leaves, Blossoms, Fruit, serving a Variety of Purposes in Human Life *.

Q. Cou'd this Earth make or change itself?

A. No.

Q. Must it not have an all-wise, powerful and good Creator? A. Yes

Q. Is it possible to explain the Philosophy of its Motion and wonderful Transformations without a God? A. No.

2.) Q. What Characters of Design, Wisdom, and Goodness are visible in the Element of WATER? A. If the Water was either more rare and thin, or more dense and thick, Fish cou'd not live in it; and that noble and numerous Race of Creatures wou'd

* If we consider the *Face* of the Earth, how full is it of Charms! The hidden *Strata* or Beds of rich Minerals, Clays, &c. the *Structure* and globular Form of it; its *Stability* and Firmness; its *Situation* in a proper Point or Circle of the immense Void; the *Cohesion* of its Parts, by Gravitation, Magnetism, or other invisible Chain; its *Motion*; why it moves at all, why in a Circle, why with a certain Degree of Velocity; why it keepeth one constant Track, and loseth not a Minute in a Race of many thousand Years; why it is not endless Night, or endless Day; why not always Summer, or eternal Winter. — If we seriously consider these Wonders, we cannot but join with the sacred Writer, and say, in Amazement, *How manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all; The Earth is full of thy Riches.* Psal. civ. 5 - 30.

be extinguished: Nor cou'd Ships swim in it; and there wou'd be an End of Trade and all Correspondence with distant Countries. It is so fluid, slippery and wholesome, as to be fit for all the Uses of the Kitchen; to be Drink for Man and Beast, and the Source of all Liquors; and is capable of being led almost wherever Men please. Tho' it is very heavy, yet it is raised insensibly over our heads, hangs in the lighter Air in thick Clouds, and waters the Earth as by a Colander; and is the universal Principle of Vegetation. It circulates in Pipes under Ground; has Reservoirs in the Mountains, whence it issues out in Springs, runs down in delightful Streams, and at last forms the vast Sea. In the Sea it has prodigious Flowings and Reflowings, or risings and Fallings in regular Order every day, and in certain Bounds; which periodical Motion preserveth it from Stagnation and Corruption, and greatly facilitates Navigation. Water is salt in the Sea to keep it sweet and render it heavy; but is purified in the Earth and Air to render it pleasant and healthful. It is capable of becoming hard to Stone; and is often changed into Ice, Hail, Snow, Air &c.

C 2

Q. Cou'd

* The Consideration of *Rivers*, in how strange a Manner they arise from the Sea, climb up to the Top of Mountains, pass thro' invisible Meanders, and return to the Sea again. *Eccles. i. 7.*—Of the Sea, the Formation of the species

28 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. Cou'd so useful a Fluid be made and managed, except by a Being of unsearchable Wisdom, Power, and Goodness? A. No.

3.) Q. What Characters of Design, Wisdom and Goodness do we see in the AIR?

A. By its Transparency it admits Rays of Light to pass thro' it from the Sun and Stars. It is so nicely purified, as to be fit to breathe in; and is the great Instrument of Life to all Animals: Whereas were it either thicker or thinner, all living Creatures wou'd soon die. It is impregnated with Particles which promote Vegetation and the Fruitfulness of the Earth. It is a chief Instrument in the Digestion of Food. And is absolutely necessary for making and hearing of Sounds*.

Q. Must

cious Gulph, the Proportioning the Water and Land, its Situation, Contexture, Saltness, Tides, innumerable Inhabitants; serious Consideration about these Objects, must lead Men up to God, the supreme Creator and Governor of all. Psal. civ. 5, &c.

* How great is the Power and Goodness of God, who keeps us from being *crushed* to pieces by the *external Air*, whose Weight on a Man of six Foot is reckoned equal to 22680 Pounds; and from being *tore* to pieces by the Spring of the *internal Air*! Who but God can thus preserve the Ballance between them! How good is God, to compass the whole Globe with this necessary Fluid, of which if deprived a few Minutes we die! And to preserve it fit to breathe in! How wise and how kind to indue the Air with *Invicibility* and *Insipibility*, that we might not have *our Eyes* or *Taste* offended by the various filthy Particles *with which it is filled*, arising from Carrion, Puddles, and *other disagreeable Objects*.

Q. A.

Q. Must not a Being of infinite Understanding and Goodness be the Contriver and Preserver of so necessary, useful and delightful an Element? A. Yes.

Q. Are there not plain Marks of Design and Kindness in the Creation of FIRE, which is applicable to so many and so needful Purposes; and which yet lies so peaceably in Flints and other Bodies, till Men force it out? A. Yes.

4) Q. What Characters of Design, Wisdom and Goodness are to be seen in the HEAVENS? A. The magnificent Arch raised over our Heads, and filled with rolling Worlds of Light, declare a Builder infinitely more magnificent. The Succession of Day and Night, so fit and useful for the successive Labours and Repose of Men; the Quantity of Light and Heat poured down every Day from the SUN, that glorious Father of the Day; that Candle of the Lord, the Moon, so useful in reflecting Light borrowed from the Sun, when

Q. Are Storms and Thunder any Objections to the Wisdom and Goodness of the Plan of the World? A. No; Winds and Storms are necessary to clear the Air, to dry the Earth, to transport Clouds, to winnow Corn, to navigate Ships, &c. Thunder and Lightning are the Artillery of Heaven, the Almighty's Fireworks, proper to keep Men in awe, and serviceable to purge the Air, and burn up the noxious Ingredients in it. So Thistles and Moles, besides other Uses, oblige Men to good Husbandry; Lice tie Men to Cleanliness in their Bodies; Spiders—in their Houses; Moths—in the Clothes; Nettles have Scings, but useful to guard so good Medicine from the Rapes of Children and Cattle.

30 *The Christian Catechism.*

out of our Sight; and for raising the Tides in the Sea; the *Stars*, which add such a Glory to the Heavens, all declare their Maker God*.

Q. Cou'd

* The *Sun* is a most wonderful Being, as it is an inexhaustible Fountain of Light and Heat; by its Light it refresheth us with a thousand fine Prospect, every Day; by its Heat it is the Life of the Earth, of Plants and Animals. Its Magnitude and Situation are wonderful; for was it greater, or nearer to us, we shou'd all be burnt up; was it less, or at a greater Distance, we shou'd be froze to Death. How astonishing is it, that Light is poured out from the Sun in so vast a Quantity as to fill all the immeasurable Space between us and the Firmament, even as far as *Saturn*! And that it comes with a Swiftness unconceivable; for did it move no faster than a Ball shot from the Mouth of a Cannon, it wou'd, according to the best Judges, be twenty-four or thirty Years in coming from the Sun to us; whereas now it performs its prodigious Journey in seven or eight Minutes. Supposing the Sun moves round the Earth (tho' if the Earth moves round the Sun it is the same) how surprizing it never forgets its Duty, never makes one Excursion beyond the Tropicks, or wanders into the immense Void; but by a confined and most regular Motion, occasions the successive Returns of Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, for many thousands of Years together! How wonderful that none of the fixed Stars or Planets, those moving Globes, are overturned, crush our Ball, set it on Fire, or jostle it out of its Place!

Q. Cou'd such an immense Globe of Fire as the *Sun* be contrived, created, fed, governed by any but a God of infinite Wisdom and Power? A. No.

Q. Had the *Sun* eternally existed, wou'd it not have been exhausted long before now? A. Yes.

Q. If a Candle does not come into a Student's Chamber by Chance; is it not the highest Instance of Folly andupidity, to suppose that the *Sun*, the Candle of the Universe came into the Firmament by Chance? A. Yes.

Q. 18

in Q. Cou'd any make such a Frame of
ry Things, so vast, so coherent, so beautiful,
er so beneficial, but a Being of infinite Under-
standing, Power and Goodness? A. No.

Q. What Characters of Design, Wisdom
and Goodness appear in the Make and Ac-
tions of ANIMALS? A. All the inferior Clas-
ses are visibly designed for Man's Advantage:
The Horse is fitted to supply Man's Weak-
ness; Cows are moving Kitchens to boil the
Herbs and Grass of the Field, and strain the
Juices into pleasant and wholesome Milk;
Sheep and Goats yield a superfluous Fleece
of Wool and Hair every Year, as well as
Skins and Flesh when killed, to cloath and
feed Man. Silk-worms Spin for us; Bees
prepare us Honey and Wax with great La-
bour, and unsearchable Ingenuity; and are an
exemplary Commonwealth before our Eyes:
Dogs are our Guards, and give us an agree-
able Image of Society, Friendship, Fidelity
and Courage. The *Instincts*, or natural Saga-
city of Animals discover a superior Intelli-
gence which governs them: while Men
commit Blunders, other Creatures act by in-
fallible Dictates, according to the exactest
Rules of Mechanism and Mathematicks; as

Q. If a Planetarium, which is only an imperfect Model
or Imitation of the Planetary System, lead us to admire the
Artist who framed it; ought not the Knowledge of the
grand and noble System it self cause us to admire and adore
the infinite Builder and Supporter of it? A. Yes.

Bees.

32 *The Christian Catechism.*

Bees, in forming their Combs; Birds, in building their Nests; Hounds, in hunting, &c.

Q. Seeing they act without Deliberation, and without Freedom or Choice, and yet act according to perfect Art, and above the Reach and Skill of Man, does not this shew the perfect Art and Reason of their Maker, the unerring Skill of the great Artificer? **A.** Yes. *

6.) Q.

* To the Usefulness and Subserviency of the inferior Animals to Man; and to the Instances of their natural Sagacity may be added, as a farther Proof of a wise, designing good Creator, “ That tho’ no Animal is immortal, yet by Generation every Kind continues; and both the Kinds and Sexes are multiplied in fit Proportions. That an infinite variety of Food is prepared for the infinite Sorts and Numbers of Creatures before they exist.

That Insects and other Animals lay their Eggs where there is proper Repast for their Young: And every Creature is furnished with Instruments proper for getting its Livelihood: Birds and Beasts of Prey are terribly armed for this End. That all Animals have an invincible Affection to their Young, and Females are furnished with Teats in proportion to the Number of their Young. Those Creatures which have Teeth in both Jaws have but one Stomach; but those which have no upper Teeth, or none at all, have three Stomachs; a Beasts and graniverous Animals. That the several Species of Creatures are preserved by a seeming Contradiction, preying one upon another; and while they have all their Enemies which devour many Individuals, yet they have all Means of Self defence, sufficient to preserve the Species; for Instance, Plants feed on the Juices of the Earth, Caterpillars on Plants, Birds on Caterpillars, Men on Birds. *No have Men any Reason to object to this, since the Birds a*
Wor

6.) Q. What Characters of Design, Wisdom and Goodness are visible in the Structure of MAN'S BODY? A. That *so fine a Structure* shou'd be rais'd out of so coarse and unapt Matter as Clay, shews the unsearchable Skill of the Creator. The *Posture* of Man is majestick, and strikes the Inferior Creatures with Awe; his *erect Countenance* in-

Worms have as good a Right to their Food as they, namely, *the Grant of God*.

Moreover, Birds build with inimitable Art, they build high, to be out of the reach; and in thick Bushes, to be out of the Sight of Enemies. They have Wings (as Fishes have Fins) which serve as Oars to cut the Air; and Tails, which serve as Rudders to steer the floating Body, or to assist their Ascent and Descent. The Shafts of their Feathers are strong and smooth, yet Light; the Vanes are nicely gauged on either Side to resist the Air and turn off Water. Migrating Birds miss not their Way thro' the trackless Air in passing from Country to Country. Bees work in the Dark their odoriferous Cells, in Figures of all others the most capacious and strong, in the utmost Perfection; and are an instructive Pattern of prudent OEconomy, Industry, a publick Spirit, Neatness, Temperance and all social Virtue. Cranes have long Necks in proportion to their Feet. Ducks have large Skins on their Feet, to keep them from sinking on miry Banks, and to assist them in Swimming. Chickens have Part of the Yolk of the Egg inclosed in their Belly for Nourishment, till able to pick. Male Crows will almost starve themselves to feed the Females, during Incubation.

Besides the Wonders apparent to the naked Eye in every Animal; by the help of Glasses Men have discovered *new Worlds of Animals*, before invisible, being infinitely little; and new Wonders in the Structure of their Parts. These, and thousands, yea millions more Instances demonstrate to every attentive Mind an infinitely wise and good Creator.

icates

dicates he was designed to look towards and contemplate Heaven. The *Skin* giveth a sweet and delightful Colour, defends all the other Parts; and, tho' so fine, will wear out many Suits of Clothes; it is full of Holes, to let out the Sweat, but not so large as to let out the Blood. The *Limbs* are all in proportion to one another, and all to his Size. The Bones of the Legs and Thighs are like equal Pillars supporting the whole Fabrick, yet folding into one another in bending; and are fastned in the Feet as in their Pedestals. The noble *Bowels* (the Heart, Lungs, Liver, Stomach, Intestines, &c.) are guarded by hooped Ribs, which open and dilate for Respiration. The *Head* stands uppermost to adorn and govern the whole; it is graced with various Senses, placed on high for quick Intelligence, and near the Brain to receive immediate Orders †.

Q. Does

† To the Instances given, may be added, the wonderful System of *Blood-Vessels*, which convey the vital Fluid to and from every Part of the Body. The incessant, yet unwearied Labour of the *Heart* *Respiration*, performed by the concurring Aid of a thousand Muscles. *Nutrition*, in order to which the Food passeth thro' several Kinds and Degrees of Digestion in the Mouth, the Stomach, and the Intestines; which last are about six times the Length of Man, in order to retard the Food till the Chyle is pressed out; and then the dreggy Contents are discharged in a Part of the Body, where they are the least Offensive to the Senses. *How wisely are two large Muscles planted in the Part we sit on, to render that Posture easy to us! The Back-*
bone

The Christian Catechism. 35

Q. Does not all this Apparatus shew Art and Wisdom in the Creator, and that every

bone is jointed by surprizing Art, to fit it for bending or turning; and is bored in various Places for the passing of the Nerves and Blood vessels thro' it. The *Arms and Hands* are of a wonderful Form and Contexture, adapted to a thousand Purposes in Life. The *Neck* either stands stiff, or is flexible, just as there is Occasion. The *Head* is of a fit Size; the Brain is guarded by a strong, yet light Skull, and covered with comly Hair. The most useful Organs are double. The *Eyes* are full of Life, and are of a most curious Make, fitted to convey to the Soul a Sight of all surrounding Objects; and are well guarded by the Lids, Brows, and Fringes of Hair. The *Nose* is planted ju^t over the Mouth to judge of Meats by the Smell, and to add Comeliness to the Face. The *Ears* are placed on high, and reformed with Art inimitable for collecting Sounds; and lie near the Soul for quick Intelligence. The *Teeth* are enamelled or glazed, as far as exposed to the Air, to render them durable, and better to answer the End of a Mill; and thro' Springs and Pullies they act on one another with a Force equal to many thousand pound Weight. The *Tongue*, by its Form and Suppleness, is fitted to be a chief Instrument in Speaking, Tasting and Swallowing. The *Mouth* is furnished with numerous Glands, to be Fountains of Spittle to moisten the Food, and lubricate all the Organs of Speech and Eating. I shall only add, that *Infants* turn to the Breast as soon as born, and are indued with the Art of Sucking; which Action causeth a *Vacuum* before the Mouth of the Nipple, which being closed up on all Sides by the Mouth, no Air can get in to resist the circumambient Air, which presseth the Milk into the Vacuum; the Infant having a Way contrived for it to breathe thro' the Nose, while the Mouth is shut. But the Infant knows nothing of this wonderful Philosophy and Mechanism. God only is the Contriver of all, and the sole Director of the Child how to obtain the appointed Means of Life. *Job x. 11, 12.* THOU hast clothed me with Skin and Flesh, and fenced me with Bones and Sinews.

this

36 *The Christian Catechism.*

thing is contrived for Man's Advantage? **A.** Yes.

7.) **Q.** What Characters of Design, Wisdom and Goodness are there in the SOUL of Man? **A.** The Union of the Soul and Body is an unsearchable Secret. The mental Powers of Thought, Perception, Reflection, Abstraction, Inferring, lead us to God as the Author. The Memory is a strange, but useful Repository of past Ideas. Liberty, or a self-moving and determining Power, which the Soul feels and is inwardly conscious of, and which is quite above the Capacity of inactive Matter. Its Power of correcting and restraining bodily Propensions shew it to be of a Nature distinct from Body, above its Capacity, and designed to rule over it *. **Q.** Must

* Some Motions of the Body are under the absolute Command of the Soul, and governed by its Will; yet the Soul knows not the Number of animal Spirits necessary to every Motion, nor the Road they go, or how they return. Nay, the Peasant can move his Body as well as the Philosopher, and touch the right Springs, without knowing them. It is therefore a blind Power, and under the immediate Influence of a Being of Intelligence, every where present. Images are convey'd thro' the Eye; impressed on the Brain, and seen by the Soul, without any Art or Labour of ours; which must be done by the Hand of an invisible Agent of infinite Art.

What is the Shape which from the Body flies?
What moves, what propagates, what multiplies
And paints one Image in a thousand Eyes?
When to the Eye the crowding Figures pass,
How in a Point can all posselt a Place,
And lie distinguish'd in such narrow space?

Blackmores Creat. B. VII.

The Christian Catechism. 37

Q. Must not rational, active Souls be created by a Being of Understanding, Freedom and Power? A. Yes.

Q. Does not every Creature, and particularly Man, bear visible Prints of an invisible Deity, and lead us up to a Supreme, intelligent Cause? A. Yes.

Q. Can a worthy *End* be designed, and fit *Means* be chose to attain that End, except by an Understanding Being, who fore-saw both End and Means? A. No.

Q. Is not this one Argument for the Existence of God, drawn from the Frame of the visible World, sufficient to convince every Person who will consider it? A. Yes.

II. Q. Does not the general Consent of Mankind in all Ages furnish a strong (moral) Argument for the Being of a God? A. Yes.

Q. Whence must this general Consent or Belief arise? A. Either (1) from the Exercise of pure Reason; which proveth the Belief of a Deity a rational Belief. Or (2) from a divine Impression, which supposeth

The exact Resemblance Children bear to Parents can be no possible Way accounted for, no more than their first Existence, but by the Agency of a supreme, understanding being. The infinite Variety of Human *Faces*, *Voices*, and *land-writing*, so useful and necessary in social Life, is an instance of wise and kind Contrivance. Final Causes lead to a great efficient Cause. Symmetry, Beauty, Order are proofs of Understanding, and can never rise out of Chance and Confusion.

See *Cambrey* of the Existence of God.
D God

38 *The Christian Catechism.*

God to exist. Or (3) from Tradition; which Tradition must have one of the two former Causes, and so leadeth up to God.

Q. In case the general Belief arose from original Tradition, is it supposable, that the first Parents of Mankind wou'd deliver a Falshood of so great Moment? A. No.

III. Q. Is not every Man's Conscience a Witness to the Being of God? A. Yes.

Q. What is Conscience? A. It is the Judgment a Man makes of himself and his Actions, with reference to God and his Law.

Q. Ought not every Man to attend to the Voice of Conscience, speaking clearly and loudly, that verily there is a God? A. Yes.

S E C T. III.

An Objection answered.

Q. **I**F it shou'd be objected, " That this World was eternal, or had no Beginning;" by what Arguments are you able to overthrow this Objection, and prove that the World had a Beginning? A. By five short and plain ones.

Q. Which is the *first* Argument? A. All the Parts of the visible World plainly shew Coutrivance and Design.

Q. Must it not then have a Beginning? A. Yes *.

* The Testimonies of Gentile, Writers agree with the Testimony of Moses concerning the Beginning and Formation of the World.

Grot. de Verit. L. 1. S. 15.

Q. Which

Q. Which is the *second* Argument? A. If Man, the most excellent Part of the visible World, is not eternal, it is less likely that the other Parts are eternal.

Q. But do we not see that every Man has a Beginning, and came into Being but a while ago? A. Yes.

Q. And do we not feel that we ourselves but lately begun to exist? A. Yes.

Q. Must not then the Parts of the World, inferior in Excellence to Man, have a Beginning also? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *third* Argument? A. If the World had no Beginning, it had no Cause, and so wou'd be independent and unchangeable.

Q. But do we not see it is dependent and changeable? A. Yes.

Q. Then must there not be a Being on whom it depends, and who causeth Changes in it? A. Yes.

Q. Moreover, if it had no Cause, must it not exist necessarily? A. Yes.

Q. And if it existed necessarily, must it not be necessarily the same in all Respects and at all Times? A. Yes.

Q. But is it so? A. No.

Q. Which is the *fourth* Argument? A. That the Earth wou'd not have held its Inhabitants, had it been Eternal. *Gen. vi. 1. chap. x. 5, 32.*

Q. *Notwithstanding* Diseases and Wars, does
D 2 no

40 *The Christian Catechism.*

not the Earth gradually fill with Inhabitants?

A. Yes.

Q. Since it is not yet filled, must it have a late, or a temporary Beginning?

Yes *.

Q. Which is the *fifth* Argument that the World is not Eternal, but had a Beginning?

A. Men, and other Animals, cou'd not eternally begetting one another, without a Beginning.

Q. Can there possibly exist a System of Beings all dependent, and yet the *Whole* (made up of dependent *Parts*) be independent?

No.

Q. Is not this as absurd, as to suppose a Chain of unknown Length to exist, thro' the whole of which one Link hung upon another, and yet that the whole Chain hung upon Nothing? A. Yes †.

S E C

* Had the World been eternal, Learning, Arts and Sciences must have been in Perfection long ago.

† If we go ever so long or so far back in the Course of Propagation, the Understanding cannot be at Rest; we come to a first Man, Animal, Plant or Seed, who cou'd not make it self.

Since then 'tis plain, I have not always been,
I ask, from whence my Being cou'd begin?
I did not to my self Existence give,
Nor from my self the secret Power receive
By which I reason, and by which I live.
Nor cou'd my Being from my Parents flow,
Who neither did the Parts, nor Structure know.

S E C T. IV.

The Perfections of God infinite and absolutely necessary.

HA V I N G, in the most easy, clear and strong Manner, proved the Existence of God, from the Things which do appear; how may be proved the Degree of

If to my self I did not Being give,
Nor from immediate Parents did receive;
It cou'd not from my Predecessors flow,
They, than my Parents, cou'd not more bestow.
Shou'd we the long depending Scale ascend,
Of Sons and Fathers, will it never end?
If 'twill, then must we thro' the Order run
To some one Man, whose Being ne'er begun,
If that one Man, was Sempiternal, why
Did He, since independent, ever die?
If from himself his own Existence came,
The Cause, which cou'd destroy his Being name.
To seek my Maker, thus in vain I trace
The whole successive Chain of human Race;
Bewilder'd, I my Author cannot find,
Till some first Cause, some self-existent Mind,
Who form'd, and rules all Nature, is assign'd.

Blackmore on Creat. B. VI.

Tho' we shou'd grant that the World, was eternal either
(1.) As a *necessary Effect* flowing from the essential, immutable Energy of the divine Nature; according to *Aristotle*.
Or, (2.) As a *voluntary Emanation* from the All-wise and Supreme Cause; according to *Plato's Followers*; yet this wou'd not make it to be the original, self-subsisting Being,
Nor indeed did the *Espousers* of these Opinions design to exclude *Supreme Mind* or *Intelligence* out of the Universe.

Dr. Clark on the Being of God. p. 31

42 *The Christian Catechism.*

God's Perfections, or that they are all absolutely necessary? A. From the internal or essential Nature of the first Being.

Q. What are these Perfections which may be thus proved? A. The Eternity, Immutability, necessary Existence, Immateriality, Unity, and infinite Intelligence of God.

Q. In what Way may we proceed in this Proof? A. By Six Propositions.

Q. Which is the *first* Proposition, by which may be proved God's absolute ETERNITY? A. *Something has existed from Eternity.*

Q. Are there not some Beings now existing? A. Yes.

Q. Therefore must not some Beings or Being always have existed? A. Yes.

Q. For, had there been a Time when Nothing at all was, cou'd any thing have come into Being from absolute Nothing? A. No.

Q. Or, cou'd any thing start into Being of it self, without any Cause? A. No.

Q. Since then, there are some Beings which have a *Beginning*, and which cou'd not make themselves, nor have their Beginning from Nothing, must we not go back to a Being who had *no Beginning*? A. Yes.

Q. And is not a Being who has no Beginning absolutely Eternal? A. Yes*.

Q Which

* Whatever exists has a Cause of its Existence, either, 1. In the Necessity of its own Nature, and so is of it self Eternal, Or, 2. In the Will of another, who must be the Order of Nature exist before it.

The Christian Catechism. 43

Q. Which is the *second* Proposition concerning the INDEPENDENCY and IMMUTABILITY of God? A. *There has existed from all eternity some one unchangeable, independent*
g.

Q. Can every Being, absolutely speaking, without any Exception, depend on another? A. No.

Q. For, wou'd they not then depend upon Being, that is, on Nothing; that is, they w'd not depend? A. Yes.

Q. And is not this a Contradiction? A.

Q. If all Being cannot depend, must there be an Independent Being? A. Yes.

Q. And if he depend on no Being, is there Being who can make any Change in him? A. No.

Q. Must he not then be Unchangeable? A.

g.

Q. Can we comprehend an eternal Duration now actual? A. No.

Q. Yet is this an undeniable Truth? A. Yes.

There has not been an infinite Succession of changeable, ident Beings produced from one another without any initial: for then Nothing in the Universe is necessarily being. Moreover, this *series of Beings*, 1. Has no Cause out it, for it is supposed to include all Things. 2. no Reason of Existence within it self; because no one is supposed Self-existent, or necessary, neither any nor the whole; which is a Contradiction and Impossible; for it supposes something to be caused (as every Succession is granted to be) without any Cause.

Q. Which

Q. Which is the *third* Proposition, proving the absolute NECESSITY of God's Existence? A. *This unchangeable and independent Being, who has existed from Eternity without any external Cause of his Existence, must be Self-existent, that is, necessarily existing.*

Q. Must not whatever is in Being exist one of these three Ways; either 1. absolutely without any Cause. Or, 2. have been produced by some external Cause, Or, 3, be Self-existent? A. Yes.

1. Q. Can any Being arise absolutely out of Nothing, without a Cause? A. No.

2. Q. Can every Being, absolutely speaking, or without Exception, be produced by some external Cause? A. No.

3. Q. Must not then there be some eternal, independent Being, who is Self-existent? A. Yes.

Q. Will not that Being which has existed necessarily from Eternity, necessarily exist to Eternity? A. Yes.

Q. For, is it not a clear Truth, “That what *could* never but be, *can* never but be?” A. Yes *.

Q. What

* All Beings are of two Sorts, 1. What was of it self
2. What was not of it self.

Q. Does *Self-existent* mean, what produc'd it self? A. No.

Q. For, wou'd not that imply this Contradiction, To be and not to be, at the same Time? A. Yes.

Q. WY

Q. What is the *fourth* Proposition, proving that the material World cannot be God?

A. *This visible, material World cannot possibly be the first, original Being, uncaused, independent, and of it self eternal; either as to its FORM, MOTION or MATTER.*

Q. Why cannot the *Form* or Figure of the World have existed necessarily? A. Because then it cou'd never be changed.

Q. Why cou'd not the *Motion* of the Parts of the material World have existed necessarily and independently? A. Because then there cou'd be no possible *Rest*; nor any other *Degree* of Motion than what exists.

Q. Why cou'd not the *Matter* of the World be eternal and necessarily exist? A. Because then it wou'd be necessarily every

Q. What does *Self-existent* mean? A. What cou'd not possibly but be; or, what exists by an absolute Necessity in the Nature of the Thing it self.

Q. What means a *Necessary* Being? A. What does not exist either by its own Choice, or of any other.

Q. Is absolute Necessity equal in all *Duration* or Time, and in all *Space* or Place; or always and every where? A. Yes.

Q. Therefore whatever belongs to a necessary, Self-existent Being, must it belong to it *all at once*, at *all Times*, and in *all Degrees*? A. Yes.

Q. And cannot it possibly not belong to it? A. No.

Necessity, view'd with attentive Thot,
Does plain Impossibility denote
That Things shou'd not exist, which actually are,
Or, in another Shape, or different Modes appear.

Blackmore B. V.
where

where, so that no Place cou'd be empty*.

Q. What is the *fifth* Proposition, in order to prove the UNITY of God? A. *The self-existent Being must of necessity be but One.*

Q. Is not the Idea of *Necessity* a plain, simple, uniform Idea, as to Place, Duration and all Perfection? A. Yes.

* Gravitation and Motion prove an actual *Vacuum*. And that a Vacuum is conceivable, and carrieth no Contradiction in it, proveth the Possibility of one; and if of one, of many.

Q. Is not *Matter* a dead, inactive Substance, which stands in need of a constant Support, that it may exist any Way? A. Yes.

Q. Must it not then stand in need of the Power of the same Cause to give it its first Existence? A. Yes.

Baxter's Matho. V. I. p. 242.

Q. Can *Matter*, which in its Nature carrieth in it a Resistance to perform any one Effect, be made the Means of performing an infinite Number of Effects, but by an *Immaterial* Being? A. No.

Q. If *Matter* can do Nothing, must not all material Nature be constantly influenced and acted upon by an *immaterial* Cause? A. Yes.

Q. And must not this Cause be a *living*, active Cause? A. Yes.

Q. And must it not be *every where present*, acting upon all Matter, at all Times? A. Yes.

Q. But can *Matter*, which is not *One* Being; but an infinite Number of distinct Beings, be present in more than one Point of Space at one Time? A. No.

Q. And since every Particle of Matter is a distinct Being, and has a separate Existence, may it not be conceived not to exist, or to be annihilated, without affecting the Rest? A. Yes.

Q. Can it then have a necessary Existence? A. No.

Q. And must not the Agency of an immaterial Being be necessary to the Union and Cohesion of the several Particles of Matter? A. Yes.

The Christian Catechism. 47

Q. To suppose two such necessary, independent Beings, is it not a Contradiction, as it supposes neither of them to be necessary?

A. Yes.

Q. For may we not (without a Contradiction) suppose one of the two not to exist; and so not to have a necessary Existence? A. Yes.

Q. Is not our Idea of God, the Idea of one Person, or of one intelligent Agent?

A. Yes.

Q. Is another Person included in this Idea? A. No.

Q. Is all Multiplicity and Variety of Beings and Persons excluded from the Idea of a necessary Being? A. Yes *.

Q. Farther,

* A more easy Way of proving the UNITY of God.

1. Q. Have we *any Reasons* for believing there are more Supreme Gods than one? A. No, none.

Q. For is not an Infinity of Perfections all that is either conceivable or desirable in God? A. Yes.

Q. And are not all these in the One self-existent Being? A. Yes.

Q. And necessarily in him? A. Yes.

Q. Then is not the Supposition of more infinite Beings unnecessary and unreasonable Supposition? A. Yes.

Q. Could any thing be done by *two*, or more Gods, which cannot be done by *one*? A. No.

Q. Do we then need more than One? A. No.

Q. Shou'd more than one be supposed, without any Reasons for such a Supposition? A. No.

2. Q. But have we *many good Reasons* to believe there is *but one Supreme God*, who made and governs the World? A. Yes.

Q. Whence

48 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. Farther, must not infinite Perfection be *undivided*? A. Yes.

Q. For does not Division imply Limitation, or want of Infinity? A. Yes.

Q. Cou'd

Q. Whence may the *first* Reason be drawn? A. From the Nature of an infinite Being.

Q. Is not one infinite, Being commensurate to the whole Possibility of Being? A. Yes.

Q. For, can there be *more* Perfection than is comprehended in the Idea of Infinite or all possible Perfection? A. No.

Q. Therefore cou'd we possibly conceive *two* infinite Beings, wou'd there be any more *Knowledge* or *Power* in *two* than in *one*? A. No.

Q. Whence may we draw a *second* Reason? A. From the Effects, in the visible Creation.

Q. Is the Universe one whole Work, carrying in it visible Marks of Unity, of Design and of Power? A. Yes.

Q. Can there be *two* *Total Causes* of the same Effect? A. No.

Q. For, if one is the whole Cause, must the other not be the Cause? A. Yes.

Q. And if one Cause was sufficient, was not the other, both in part and in whole, needless? A. Yes.

Q. Moreover in case there were two Supreme Causes acting freely, might they not *will* contrary Things (in Matters of indifferency, as in creating a Globe in such a Part of Space or Duration)? A. Yes.

Q. But does not a *Possibility of being bindred* contradict our Idea of God? A. Yes.

Q. Whence may be drawn a *third* Reason for the Unity of God? A. From our Idea of Goodness in God.

Q. If there were two God's concerned in creating and governing the World, both of infinite Goodness, wou'd they not, out of Affection to each other, and to Men, acquaint us with the Being of their Fellow God's? A. Yes.

Q. Why wou'd their Affection to each other cause them to do it? A. That they might receive the Veneration due to them from Men.

Q. V

The Christian Catechism. 49

Q. Cou'd infinite Power or Knowledge divide itself? A. No.

Q. Why not? A. Because it is necessary that it is.

Q. Cou'd it be divided by any other? A.

Q. Why not? A. Because nothing else existed originally but it self.

Q. If the Perfections of the divine Being are indivisible, must not the Being in whom they subsist be indivisible, or be necessarily

A. Yes.

Q. If there be no *Natural* Necessity of more Gods than one; can there be a *Moral* Necessity of more than one? A. No.

Q. Is not one supreme Being, who has all Perfection, and Fulness, sufficient to govern the World for the Creation and Government of the World? A. Yes.

Q. What is the *sixth* Proposition? A. *Self-existent and original Cause of all things must be an INTELLIGENT Being.*

Q. Is not this Proposition best demonstrated by its Effects? A. Yes.

Q. For Instance, 1. If there are intelligent Beings in the World, which proceeded from

Q. Why would their Affection to Men cause them to

A. That Men might have Pleasure in paying their Acknowledgments to their Benefactors; and by doing their Duty be qualified for farther Marks of their Fa-

50 *The Christian Catechism.*

the First, must not that First Being be intelligent? A. Yes.

Q. For must not the Cause be more excellent than the Effects? A. Yes.

Q. 2. Does not the Order, Beauty and Usefulness of the several Parts of the Universe prove an intelligent Cause? A. Yes.

Q. Since every thing is fitted and ordered to an End, does not this prove a foreseeing, designing Cause, who ordered both End and Means? A. Yes*.

Q. 3.

* Beings which have *Life, Understanding, Power, Goodness*, are more perfect than those without them; therefore all these are in God, the most perfect Being, and the Cause of all Perfection.

They are in God *infinite*, or without Limits; for no Being *without God* could limit them; nor is there any thing *is God* to limit them.

All Perfection either had a Beginning, or had not; what had no Beginning is the Perfection of God; what had a Beginning, must have it from another; which leads us to a *First Cause*, which must have all the Perfections which are in the *Effects*.

A Chain of Arguments proving the Intelligence and other Perfections of God from the Consideration of the Nature of God, the first Cause.

1. Q. Are not *Knowledge* and *Power* visible in the Nature of Things? A. Yes.

Q. Must there not then be an intelligent, powerful Being in whom they subsist? A. Yes.

Q. For can these Perfections belong to, or be the Properties of *Nothing*? A. No.

Q. Must they not also belong to One and the same Being? A. Yes.

Q. For,

The Christian Catechism. 51

Q. 3. Cou'd Motion ever begin in the World of it self? A. No.

Q. Must it not then have an intelligent, free, immaterial Cause to be its Original, and its Director? A. Yes.

Q. Can

Q. For, wou'd not Knowledge without Power be as *Useless* as real Folly? A. Yes.

Q. And wou'd not Power without Knowledge be *hurtful*, or be ungovern'd Fury? A. Yes.

2. Q. Cou'd these Perfections *ever be produced*, or have any external Cause? A. No.

Q. For, had they once not existed, cou'd they ever have existed? A. No.

Q. Cou'd they arise from absolute Nothing? A. No.

Q. Therefore is not their Existence absolutely necessary? A. Yes.

3. Q. If there be a Being then who necessarily exists, must not all possible Perfections, and in all possible Degrees, necessarily exist in him? A. Yes.

Q. Must not then the Perfections of God be *infinite*, or unlimited? A. Yes.

Q. For is it not Physically and Morally impossible that necessary Knowledge and Power shou'd limit themselves? A. Yes.

Q. And was there nothing else to limit them? A. No.

Q. Farther, must not infinite Perfections be either absolutely *impossible*, or absolutely *necessary*? A. Yes.

Q. Cou'd they be absolutely impossible, when we have, and cannot but have Ideas of Infinity, Eternity, Necessity? A. No.

Q. Is not an infinite, eternal, necessary *Nothing* a Contradiction? A. Yes.

Q. Must these be Properties of Something? A. Yes.

Q. Therefore does not an infinite, eternal, necessary Being exist? A. Yes.

4. Q. Does not infinite Intelligence or Knowledge in
E 2 clu

52 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. Can the least Bowl begin or determine its own Motion, without the Hand of Man?

A. No.

Q. Wou'd it not then be unreasonable to

clude Wisdom, and the moral Perfections of Justice and Goodness? A. Yes.

Q. Must not infinite Knowledge See what is best to be done in all possible Cases and Relations; and what Means are fittest to produce every End? A. Yes.

Q. And is not this infinite *Wisdom*? A. Yes.

Q. Must not infinite Wisdom incline and determine God to CHOOSE what is best, and to ACT after the best Manner? A. Yes.

Q. And is not this the very Idea of infinite *Justice* and *Goodness*, always to act after the best Manner? A. Yes.

Q. Again, does not infinite Perfection, infinite Knowledge and Power, imply infinite *Happiness*? A. Yes.

Q. Can a Being infinitely happy, or raised above all Possibility of Want, have any Reason or Motive to be unjust to his own Creatures? A. No.

Q. And will a wise Being ever act without Reason or Motive? A. No.

Q. Farther, when Knowledge and Power are manifested to, or for the sake of intelligent Beings, does not this constitute *Goodness*? A. Yes.

Q. Does Goodness suppose and include *Justice*? A. Yes.

Q. For can He, who, from an inward and essential Principle, seeks the good of another Being, be capable of doing it Injury or Wrong? A. No.

Q. Are not *Malice* and *Envy*, Cruelty and Tyranny as contrary to Goodness and Justice, as *Ignorance* and *Impotence* are to Knowledge and Power? A. Yes.

Q. Can they then be ascrib'd to God? A. No.

5. Q. If these Perfections of Knowledge, Power, Goodness include each other, can any thing disjoin them? A. No.

Q. Must they not then subsist in One Being? A. Yes.

See *Matth. Vol. I*

absur

absurd in the last Degree, to ascribe the Motion and Direction of the Bowl of the Earth or Sun to any but that intelligent Being we call God? A. Yes*.

Q. To conclude; Is it not a Prospect full of Comfort and Security, that a Being of infinite Power, under the Direction of infinite Wisdom and Goodness, rules the Universe? A. Yes.

Q. Cou'd there be any Pleasure or Tranquility in Life without this Prospect? A. No.

Q. Can it then be any Man's true Interest to live in an ungovern'd World? A. No.

Q. Are not they Enemies to themselves, to Mankind, and to the King of the Universe, who attempt to perswade themselves or others, that there is no God? A. Yes.

Q. Does not seeing the whole Frame of Nature contrived by infinite Wisdom, and supported by infinite Power, give Man the fullest and strongest View of a Deity his Heart can wish for? A. Yes.

* If Motion begun in *Time*, the Point is granted; for Matter could never put it self into Motion.

-If Motion is affirmed to be *Eternal*, then 1. Either it proceeded from an intelligent Being; which also grants the Question. Or, 2. It is Self-existent; and then it cou'd never alter or cease. Or, 3. It must have existed by endless Succession; which is a Contradiction, as being an Effect without a Cause, either from *without*, or *within* it self; that is, here's a *necessary Existence* of the *Whole*, when no *one Part* is necessary, but communicated.

Dr. Clark, &c

C H A P. II.

Proofs of a Providence.

S E C T. I.

Q. **W**HAT do you mean by a Providence? A. The world's being inspected, upheld and governed by the God who made it*.

Q. Whence may the *first* Sort of Argument be drawn to prove a Providence? A. From the Cause to the Effects; or, from the Being, Nature and Perfections of God.

Q. Which is the *first* Argument? A. That it is unreasonable to suppose an infinitely wise God wou'd make such a *World* as this, and then leave it to it self, and take no farther Care of it. Or, that a God of infinite Under-

* Providence is no other than the unsearchable *Wisdom*, the unalterable *Rectitude*, the impartial *Justice*, the immense *Goodness* and *Benignity* of the divine Nature displayed in the Government of created Beings.

Ditton on the Resurrect. p. 49

Q. Does *Nature* produce any Effects? A. No; but is the great Author of Nature.

Q. What is *Nature* then? A. It is nothing else but the universal and perpetual Efficaciousness of God's Will as a Law.

Dr. Clark on the Cat. p. 5

Or, *Nature* is only the Works of God, with the Order in which they subsist, and the Dependence they have upon another.

stand

standing wou'd form such a Creature as *Man*, and not observe his whole Behaviour.

Q. Which is the *second* Argument? A. An *Omniscient* and *Omnipresent* Being must know every Creature he has made, with every thing that is done, in every Part of the Universe; and therefore with perfect Ease is able to take Notice of and govern all Affairs, great and small.

Q. Which is the *third* Argument? A. A Being of infinite *Power* must be able to over-rule and direct every thing in such a Manner, and to such Ends, as he knows to be best and fittest in the whole; yet so as to leave rational Beings their essential Liberty.

Q. Which is the *fourth* Argument? A. A *just* and *good* God will take exact Notice of all the free moral Actions of his Creatures, and observe how far they are conformable to the Rules he has given them.

Q. Thus do all the Perfections of God afford a strong Argument for a Providence? A. Yes.

Q. Is there any Reason to suppose, that the wise, powerful, good Parent of the Universe shou'd ever throw up the Care of his own Works? A. No.

Q. Is it not then as unreasonable, as it is uncomfortable to deny a Providence? A. Yes.

S E C T. II.

Q. W HENCE may the *second Sort* of Arguments be drawn to prove Providence? **A.** From the visible World, both material and moral; which is so managed and governed, as clearly proveth a great, wise and good Governor.

Q. Are these Arguments of the plainest and most convincing Nature? **A.** Yes.

Q. For, must not all Effects have a proportionable Cause? **A.** Yes.

Q. Which is the *first Branch* of this Argument? **A.** The whole World is preserved and upheld, tho' the Parts of it are continually changing. *Psal. cxix. 89, 90, 91. Forever, O Jehovah, thy Word is settled in Heaven, Thy Faithfulness is unto all Generations: Thou hast established the Earth, and it abideth; They continue this Day according to thine Ordinances; for all are thy Servants.**

Q. Since

* The Individuals of all Creatures die, yet the whole Species never dies; but every Sort is preserved by the Creation of new Individuals. The Sun and Mass of Water spend continually, yet the Stock seems not to be diminished. But this Wonder may diminish in our Eye by attending to a yet greater Wonder, namely, that all the Particles of Light which fill the whole Orb inlightened by the Sun at once, may not amount to the Quantity of one grain of Sand. — And that a single drop of Water is divisible into 26,000,000 Parts.

Newnham's Relig. Phil. Vol. III. p. 777. 848

The Christian Catechism. 57

Q. Since, as has been proved, the material World cannot put it self into Motion, nor continue in regular Motion of it self; must not a great invisible Deity be *continually acting* in us, and all around us? A. Yes.

Q. And

The stated Transmutation of the Elements, or the several Sorts of Matter, as of Earth, Air, Water, (Fire) into Grass and Corn; of these into Milk and the Fish of the Sea; of these into Men's Bodies; and these going off again in Perspiration, Sweat, Urine, and returning into the same of Grass and Corn, &c. cannot be accounted for, but by the continued Agency of an infinitely wise and powerful Creator and Governor.

If a Man throw the same lucky Cast at Dice a hundred times together, no one will deny it proceeds from *Design* and *Order*. How monstrously absurd then to deny the Design and Order of the great Governor of the World, when thro' all the Classes of Creatures every Individual rises up in the World and with the Parts proper to its own Sort!

Sow, for instance, different Sorts of Seed by one another in the same Earth; they will stand in the same Air, be watered by the same Water, be warmed by the same Sun; and yet acquire from all these *similar* Elements an infinite Number of *different* Particles? A clear Proof of a Providence, or that certain Laws obtain, or that there is a certain all-guided Influence in all these numerous Kinds of Matter;

which is the Cause that every Particle of Matter necessary to the Growth of every individual Seed does unite it self thereto, and never mistakes its Road, and joins it self to a Seed of different Properties. This is the Cause that every Seed produceth its own Plant, of the same Kind, Form, Colour, Virtue, every Year, without once failing,

that wherever there are such poisonous Herbs as *Aconite* or *Hemlock* scattered and mingled in the same Earth with Wheat, Rye, Barley and other Grain, so useful to Mankind, there are joined only to the first fatal and deadly Particles; and to the latter only wholesome ones. And thro' the same Cause an Apple-Tree never bears Pears, or a Vine

Cherries.

Q. And must not He be *always and ever where present*, whenever and wherever he acts? A. Yes.

Q. Wou'd the Sun, the Earth, and other Planets keep their Stations and Courses with perfect, unerring Regularity and Exactness for Ages together? Wou'd the Vapors continually rise and circulate in Clouds, Rain and Rivers? Wou'd the Juices of the Earth rise up thro' small Tubes and be formed into strong Timber and Bark, into Leaves, Blossoms, Fruit? Wou'd the Meat taken into our Bodies turn into Nourishment, every Particle be carried to its similar Part, and the vital Fluid keep in a never ceasing Circulation? Cou'd these, and other Effects be produced but by the Influence and Operation of an intelligent, powerful God ever where present? A. No.

Q. When new Beings, vegetative, An

Cherries. A Proof of an understanding and benevolent Being influencing and guiding all.

Nieuwentit. V. III. p. 100

The Body of an Animal, particularly of a Man, is a single System of Providence, which lies in a short Compass.—When we see such a Similitude and Resemblance in the Arm, the Hand, the Fingers; when we see one Half of the Body intirely correspond with the other in all those minute Strokes; without which a Man might very well have subsisted,—a Man must have a very strange Cast of Understanding, who does not discover the Finger of God in this wonderful a Work.—These Duplicates in the Body are plain Demonstration of an All-wise Contriver.

Spea. V. VII. No. 5

The Christian Catechism. 59

Rational are continually produced, and up in the World, cou'd they exist, grow, be maintained but by an intelligent, powerful Agent every where acting? A.

Q. When all the Parts of the visible, material and animal World are contributing to promote the Good and Happiness of Men, does not this prove, that the Author of the Universe, and Parent of Mankind is a benevolent Being, continually exercising his goodness towards the Human Race? A.

Q. And shou'd not these Reflections cause every human Heart to overflow with Veneration, Gratitude, Obedience, Love and Joy? Yes.

Q. Which is the *second* Branch of this Argument for a divine Providence? A. In the Political World, Kingdoms and States are so remarkably changed and over-ruled, plainly proves a Hand superior to Man's. n. ii. 20, 21. *Wisdom and Might are his; he changeth the Times and Seasons: He retheth Kings, and setteth up Kings*.*

Q. Which

A Bill of Mortality is, in my Opinion, an unanswerable Argument for a Providence; how can we, without supposing our selves under the constant Care of a supreme Being, give any possible Account for that nice Proportion which we find in every great City between the Births and Deaths of Inhabitants; and between the Number of Males and that of females, who are brought into the World? What else cou'd

5

u
ac

Pl
per
for
tinu
and
rise
to st
Bloss
into
very
and th
Circul
be pro
tation
where
Q. W

The Christian Catechism. 61

and his Wrath is against all who forsake him. Prov. xi. 31.

As there are most evident Proofs of *natural* Providence over the material animal World; is not also a *moral* Providence, or God's Regard to the free Actions of his Creatures very evident? A. Yes.

For is there not an essential Difference between Actions, as plain and great as between Light and Darkness, Sweet and Bitter, Pleasure and Pain? A. Yes.

Are not Ingratitude, Treachery, Cruelty, Intemperance essentially and unalterably evil? A. Yes.

And are not Gratitude, Fidelity, Humility, Temperance essentially and unalterably good? A. Yes.

Must not the great Father of the Universe, and Parent of Mankind be displeased with the wicked, and pleased with the良善? A. Yes.

Is it conceivable, that a wise and good Father should be indifferent as to the Conduct and Actions of his Creatures, which are all under his Eye? A. No.

Is not every wise and good Father pleased with those dutiful, well behaved Children, who promote the Peace and welfare of the Family; and displeased with those lazy, impatient, spiteful Children who disturb it?

When to think, that

o *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. Which is a *third* Branch of this Argument for a divine Providence? A. C frequent manifesting his Favour towards Righteous, and his Displeasure against Wicked. *2 Sam. xxii. 21, 25, 26, 27. xviii. The Lord rewarded me according to Righteousness,—With the Merciful thou shew thy self Merciful, and with the up Man thou wilt shew thy self upright,—with the froward thou wilt shew thy self ward. Ezra, viii. 22. The Hand of God upon all them for good who seek him; but*

cou'd adjust in so exact a Manner the Recruits of every tion to its Losses, and divide their new Supplies of P into such an equal Number of both Sexes?

Spec. V. IV. No.

By a Table of the Numbers christned yearly in *London* 40 Years, from 1670 to 1710, it appears that there are constantly more *Men* than *Women* born; which answer great Waste of Men by Sea and Land-Fights, and by regular Way of Living. How wonderful the Providence That there are so many more Men, as still to remain every *Woman* a *Man* of her own Age, in her own Country, and of equal Condition to her! An Argument against Polygamy. This Table was made by Dr. *Arbutnot*, physician to Queen *Anne*, and sent to Dr. *Newentit* by *Burnet*, Son to the late Bishop.

Relig. Phil. V. I. p.

The Proportion of 14 Males to 13 Females is, I imagine nearly just.

Derham's Phys. T

Instances of Providence over-ruling the Wisdom Power of Man in national Revolutions are *Israel's* Deliverance out of *Egypt*. The taking of *Babylon* by *Cyrus*. *Ireland's* Reformation from Popery. The coming in of *William*. The Accession of King *George*, on the late Death of Queen *Anne*, &c.

Power and his Wrath is against all who forsake him. Prov. xi. 31.

Q. As there are most evident Proofs of God's *natural* Providence over the material and animal World; is not also a *moral* Providence, or God's Regard to the free Actions of his Creatures very evident? A. Yes.

Q. For is there not an essential Difference between Actions, as plain and great as between Light and Darkness, Sweet and Bitter, Pleasure and Pain? A. Yes.

Q. Are not Ingratitude, Treachery, Cruelty, Intemperance essentially and unalterably Evil? A. Yes.

Q. And are not Gratitude, Fidelity, Humanity, Temperance essentially and unalterably Good? A. Yes.

Q. Must not the great Father of the Universe, and Parent of Mankind be displeased with the Former, and pleased with the Latter? A. Yes.

Q. Is it conceivable, that a wise and good Creator shou'd be indifferent as to the Conduct and Actions of his Creatures, which are always under his Eye? A. No.

Q. Is not every wise and good Father pleased with those dutiful, well behaved Children, who promote the Peace and welfare of the Family; and displeased with those lazy, impudent and spiteful Children who disturb it? A. Yes.

Q. Ought we not then to think, that the
F wise

wise and good Father of Mankind is best pleased with those his Off-spring whom he observes fall in with his Design of procuring the welfare of the World; and is offended with those who counteract him? A. Yes.

Q. And, since his Power is equal to his Wisdom, will he fail of *acting* towards his Creatures and Children suitably to their different Behaviour? A. No.

Q. Does God often in this World signify his Pleasure or Displeasure at Men and Nations according to their Behaviour? A. Yes.

Q. Where he does not, shou'd this only carry our Thoughts forward into a future State, where the Plan of Providence will be finished, and all Difficulties cleared up? A. Yes.

Q. Which is a *fourth* Branch of this Argument for a divine Providence? A. Interrupting the Course of visible, second Causes, or the natural, established Order of Things, by Miracles; and foretelling these, by the Spirit of Prophecy, prove a great, invisible, foreseeing Ruler. *Dan. ii. 22, 23. He revealeth the deep and secret Things; He knoweth what is in the Darkness, and the Light dwelleth with him*.*

Q. What

* A Miracle, in the Theological Sense, taketh in the End for which it is wrought; and is a Work effected in Manner unusual, or different from the common and regular Method of Providence, by the Interposition either of
his

Q. What Proof have we of these Facts, namely, Predictions and Miracles? A. Unquestionable History.

Q. Is the *Mosaick* and *Evangelick* History Credible? A. Yes, as credible as any History in the World.

Q. Must not an Almighty Agent be acknowledged in drowning the World; dividing the Sea; opening the Earth; raising the Dead? A. Yes.

Q. When such Miracles are wrought to punish bold, presumptuous Sinners, to give a check to Sin, to deliver oppressed Innocence and Virtue, to attest and spread useful Truth, do they not prove a moral Providence, or that the World is governed by an intelligent Being, who regards the Behaviour of Mankind, and seeks their welfare? A. Yes.

Q. Which is a *fifth* Branch of this Argument for a divine Providence? A. The Dependence of great Things on small, even on unforeseen Circumstances, prove an over-ruling Mind and Hand.

Q. What Scripture Instances are there of such a Providence? A. The History of *Joseph's* Captivity and Glory. *Gen. xxxvii. 14,*

himself, or of some other intelligent Agent superior to Man, the Proof or Evidence of some particular Doctrine, or Attestation to the Authority of some particular Person.

Dr. Clark of Rev. Rel. p. 229.

By *Natural* is meant stated, fixed, settled. *Supernatural* is over-ruling the settled Order of Things.

64 *The Christian Catechism.*

Ec. The Preservation of *Moses*. *Exod.* ii.

Ec. The Death of the *Philistines* by *Sa-
len*. *Judges* xvi. The Victory of *David* o-
liath. *1 Sam.* xvii. 17, *Ec.* The Fall of *Ma-
nan*, the Rise of *Mordecai*, and the Deliv-
rance of the *Jews*. *Esb.* vi. *Ec.*

Q. Upon the whole, is it not Ground
Comfort and Joy to good Men, that whi-
they are surrounded with Enemies, and
exposed to innumerable Accidents, they
are under the Care of ONE who over-rules Hea-
ven and Earth, and has in his Power the Man-
agement of every thing capable of annoy-
ing them? A. Yes.

Q. Is not the want of our own *Foresee-
ing*, abundantly made up by the *Omniscience* of him
who is the Support of all virtuous Souls?

S.

Q. And need a good Man's Sensibility of
want of *Strength* be any Affliction, while
he knows the *Almighty* is his Helper? A. I

Q. Where is this Reliance of a pious S-
ervant of God most beautifully represented?
In the twenty-third Psalm.



S E C T. III.

OBJECTIONS *against a Providence*
answered.

Q. **W**Hich are the Properties of the divine Providence? A. It is Sovereign, Wise, Holy, Just, Good.

Q. Can it be otherwise, if it be the Providence of a God infinitely great, wise, holy, just and good? A. No.

Q. For must not the Work partake of the Properties of its Author and Cause? A. Yes.

Q. What mean you by the *Wisdom* of Providence? A. That God knows how, in all possible Circumstances, throughout the whole Universe, and thro' all Duration, to order every thing for the best.

Q. What mean you by the *Holiness* of Providence? A. That God requires Holiness from Men, and forbids Sin; and so orders the World, that they who *will* be wicked, *shall* be miserable.

Q. What mean you by the *Justice* of Providence? A. That God deals with Men suitably to their Behaviour in his Rewards and Punishments.

Q. What mean you by the *Goodness* of Providence? A. That, by all fit Means, God promotes the Perfection and Happiness of the Universe; and neglects Nothing proper to

6 *The Christian Catechism.*

romote the Welfare of the human Race.

Q. Tho' these are so obvious Properties of the Providence of God, yet are *Objections* raised by Men against each of these Properties? A. Yes.

Objections to the SOVERAIGNTY of Providence.

Q. Which is the *first* Objection to this Property of divine Providence? A. That Creatures are not made in the utmost Perfection; which they wou'd be, if infinite Power, and the Conduct of infinite Understanding, produced them.

Q. How do you answer this Objection? A. Every Creature is perfectly fitted for the End for which it was made. And if every Class of Creatures is not in the utmost possible Perfection (which yet we do not grant) this only shews a free, intelligent Agency in their Production; since unconscious Causes always act to the utmost of their Powers.

Q. Besides, do not the differing Classes of Beings, and their differing Degrees of Perfection make up, in a most glorious Manner, the Perfection of the whole? A. Yes.

Q. And may not every Rank and Order of Creatures be as perfect as it possibly could be, as a *Part* necessary to compose the whole system? A. Yes.

Q. Moreover, may there not exist as many *Orders* of the most perfect Order, as w

have existed, if only that Order had been created? A. Yes, there may.

Q. What is the *second* Objection? A. If God be absolute Sovereign, he has his Will, which can never be resisted, and he has no Reason to complain. *Rom. ix. 19.*

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. The absolute Will of God, as the Almighty Creator and Governor of the natural World, never can be resisted. But his Will as a *Moral* Governor may be disobeyed, and Actions committed by free Agents disagreeable to his Nature, and which he will punish with an irresistible Hand.

Q. While God is just and kind to all Men, have any Reason to object and complain, if, for wise Reasons, he confer Privileges on one Nation or Family, which he does not upon another. A. No.

Q. Or, if he reject one Nation for habitual and incurable Wickedness, while he extends Favours to another, not deserving them, is this any Ground of Complaint? A. No.

Q. What is the *third* Objection? A. If God be a Sovereign Ruler, he may require impossible Tasks from his Creatures, and punish them for not performing them; or, may decree to save one Man, and to damn another, for no Reason, but because he will do it.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. *ho* God is a Sovereign Ruler, yet he

not an Arbitrary, Unreasonable, Tyrannical Ruler: Tho' he doth what he *will*, yet being necessarily wise, just, holy, good, he never willeth any thing but what is perfect *Right*; but to require impossible Tasks, and then punish for not doing them; or to decree to save or damn without any Reason, the differing Qualities and Behaviour of Men, would be absolutely *wrong*; and therefore can never be done by God.

Q. If God was not obliged by the Rectitude of his Nature to observe the immutable Laws of Justice and Truth, (or if God was guided by mere *will*, without Reason, Truth and Justice) would there be any Difficulties in Providence? A. No.

Q. Then might the Just be turned into Hell, and the Wicked be taken to Heaven? A. Yes.

Q. For can any thing be unaccountable in a Being who observes no Rules? A. No.

Q. But would not this give a most unlovely, yea a frightful Idea of the good and blessed God? A. Yes.

Q. Must it not then be certainly false? A. Yes.

II. Objections to the WISDOM of Providence.

Q. Which is the *first* Objection? A. That many Creatures, inanimate, Plants and Animals are made without Design, and seem to answer no End.

Q. How

The Christian Catechism. 69

How is this Objection answered? A. The Ends for which most Creatures, and Parts of every Creature are made, are visible: and the Design of the Creator, the Ends and Uses of all Creatures, and their several Organs, appear more and more every Day, as Men apply themselves to the works of God.

If the Ends and Uses of many Creatures appear, is this to be wonder'd at? A.

Must this necessarily happen? A. Yes. Could the Wisdom of God have order otherwise? A. No.

For in an Infinity of Things, all related to each other, and each to the whole, can but an infinite Mind see every thing

A. No.

And since each Particular has Relation in General, can we have any perfect Knowledge of the Relation of any Part in a World not perfectly and fully known? A. No.

But since in all Parts of the Creation, as it is understood, there are plain Marks of Wisdom and Design, is it not reasonable to think the same as to the Parts not understood? A. Yes.

Which is the *second* Objection? A. The Earth, in some Places, is over-run with Thorns, others are wild Desarts, or un-cultivated Woods; that Crops of Corn are often

often spoiled by unseasonable Weather, noxious Animals, &c.

Q. How is this Objection answered? **A.** It is an Instance of Wisdom to create such Earth, and so to govern it as to find *Use* for Men, to whom Idleness wou'd be many ways hurtful. The Produces of Labour are also more pleasant than such as cost no Pain or Art. Thorns and Briars are useful Fences. Rocks and Hills are the Strength or Bones of the Earth, the Repositories of Water and Treasuries of Mines; the Desarts are Habitations of wild Beasts, as the Woods are of Birds. Blasted Crops teach Men their Dependence on God.

Q. Had the Earth been one fine, uniform, fruitful Meadow, without Sea, Rocks, or Woods, shou'd we not have suffered a thousand Inconveniences from it? **A.** Yes.

Q. Cou'd we then have had Rain and Rivers, a pure Air, building Timber, Fish, or the Advantages of Navigation? **A.** No.

Q. Besides, can infinite Wisdom do wrong? **A.** No.

Q. And if every Thing is ordered for the best in the *whole*, and in the final *Issue*; ought not particular and short Evils, which contribute to the good of the whole, be reckoned real Good? **A.** Yes.

Q. And ought we not with Patience and Humility wait till we see the Issue of the Plan of Providence, before we judge of the wisdom

wisdom and beauty of its Parts? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *third* Objection? A. That there are Monsters in Nature, or Fools and Madmen amongst rational Creatures.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. When we see the Power of God operating in all his Works with the utmost Regularity and Exactness; we ought to conclude that where there is any Obliquity, the weakness, sin and folly of Men, or the Actions of other spontaneous Agents have interrupted that Regularity; which Interruption cannot be charged on the Deity.

Q. Are not all Actions and Motions where the Deity is sole Agent and Mover regular? A. Yes.

Q. But where there is a concurring or subordinate Agency of Man, or any self-moving Creature, may not the Effect be irregular or monstrous thro' the Error of the subordinate Cause? A. Yes.

Q. So that, taking in the external Violences which the Laws of Nature have suffered, may not Distortions and Monstrosities be as natural and agreeable to the Laws of Matter and Motion, as the most regular Productions? A. Yes.

Q. Must not such Irregularities happen, unless Providence suspend the Course of Nature to prevent them? A. Yes.

Q. Are they not then Arguments for, and *not against* a Providence? A. Yes.

Q. May

Q. May it not be wise in God to permuch Effects? A. Yes.

Q. What Ends may be hereby answered
A. These Monsters are so great an *Entertainment* and Amusement to Mankind, that the flock in Crowds, and will give Money to see them. They are *Monitors* to Mankind to be thankful for their own Perfection in Mind and Body, and to use well their Reason and Senses. They are also a *Rebuke* to those foolish and sinful Passions, that Pride, Intemperance, Wrath, and extravagant Lust, which often occasion Distractions, Madness and Folly.

Q. Had some *Fools* more Wit, might they not become *Knaves*? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not better to be a Fool by *Nature* than by *Choice*? A. Yes.

Q. Are not wicked Men, who abuse their rational Faculties, the most odious Monster and the worst Sort of Fools and Madmen
A. Yes.

Q. And are not *moral* Incongruities and Monstrosities as easily discerned in our selves and others, to a rectified and awakened Sense as Natural and Civil ones are? A. Yes.

III. Objections to the HOLINESS of Providence.

Q. Which is the *first* Objection? A. God has forbid Sin and hates it, why did he not prevent it, since he foresaw it?

Q. He

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. God's foreseeing it implies that it cou'd not be prevented, unless he had resolv'd to make no rational and free Agents.

Q. Since God's Prescience or Foresight puts no Reality into the Objects of it, does not occasion their Existence, nor operates any Way, can it be irreconcilable to his Holiness to *foresee* Sin? A. No.

Q. And since it is a direct Consequence of Reason and free Agency given to Men, can *permitting* it be irreconcilable to his Holiness? A. No.

Q. But tho' the Prescience of Sin is reconcilable to the Holiness of God, is his *Decreeing Sin* reconcilable to it? A. No.

Q. For, if God decreed the *End*, must he not also decree the *Means*? A. Yes.

Q. And wou'd not Men be excusable in Sinning, if they sinned under the Influence of a necessitating Decree? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *second* Objection? A. The Causality of Sin is ascrib'd to God, as in hardening *Pharaoh's* Heart, and blinding the *Jews*, that they shou'd not see, &c.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. The plain meaning of those Passages is, that God left them to act up to the Inclination of their own wicked Hearts.

Q. Were not all God's Methods with them apt to convince and soften them? A. Yes.

Q. But when Men love not the Truth, is
G it

it not just in God to suffer 'em to be a Lie? A. Yes.

Q. And when they are incurably bad, fit to be destroy'd, is it unbecoming a H God to leave them to go on in Courses wh will ruin them? A. No.

Q. But to harden Men positively by *ral Efficacy*, is it not contrary to God's I fections, to his Providence, to his Wc and to the Nature of Man? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not also as *needless*, as it w be unjust, when Men are incurably blind : hard already? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *third* Objection? That the *Prevalency* of Sin in the World ov throws the Doctrine of Providence, as seems not to consist with God's Holiness.

Q. How is this Objection answered? It is not fit God shou'd use any Means prevent the Commission and Spreading of which wou'd destroy Men's Liberty of thi ing and acting.

Q. If we take in the whole Universe, i likely that Sin is, or ever will be more p valent than Virtue? A. No.

Q. And is it not probable, that bef the End of Time, even in this World, Righ ousness will prevail against Sin? A. Yes.

Q. But ought we from this mean and p luted Part of the Creation to form a Ju ment of other Regions, or of the whol A. No.

Q. Which is a *fourth* Objection? A. That some Men's Religion inspires them with Bitterness, blind Zeal, persecuting Sentiments, and factious dividing Temper; so that good Men (whom the World most needs) must go out of the World, or retire into Deserts and Woods to serve God in safety; and are hereby shut out from the Pleasures of Society, and Opportunities of doing Good.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. That it is not Religion, (which is a real Resemblance of God and Obedience to him,) but the want of it, mistaken Notions about it, and a Spirit quite opposite to it, which are the Sources of Hatred, Cruelty and Rage.

Q. Do Minds inlightned and sanctified by Religion, and hereby made great and good ever admit such Sentiments, or are they governed by such Passions? A. No.

Q. Is the Spirit of true Religion a wise, mild, candid, charitable Spirit? A. Yes.

Q. Yet may not Persecution be wisely and mildly permitted for distinguishing the Sincere, and for the Improvement of their Virtue? A. Yes.

Q. Is it also a noble Pleasure to a good and great Mind, in the worst of Times, to try to bear up a sinking World? A. Yes.

Q. And if he sink in the Ruines, will those Ruines be a Monument honourable to his Virtue, and intitle him to a glorious Reward?

Yes.

G 2

W.

IV. Objections to the JUSTICE of Providence.

Q. Which is the *first* Objection? A. That righteous and good Men bear an equal Share with the wicked in the Judgments inflicted on Mankind; the good and bad being often promiscuously cut off, without any Distinction.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. That we know little of the Counsels of God, and the Reasons and Ends of his Proceedings; so that every Man may at present be dealt with according to the *Right of the Case*, tho' we know it not.

Q. Do we know perfectly what Men are? A. No.

Q. May we not then wrongfully judge some to be bad Men, and ignorantly take some to be good Men, who are not so? A. Yes.

Q. And when Nations are punished, may not righteous Men suffer on a *social Account*, as Parts of a wicked Community? A. Yes.

Q. Tho' they are not distinguished in dying, will they be distinguished after Death? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *second* Objection? A. That bold and mischievous Men are often suffered to go great Lengths in Wickedness, and live long as Plagues to the World, while no Notice is taken of 'em. *Ecc. viii. 11.*

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. That if Thunderbolts fell on the Heads of all notorious Sinners, such a terrible Providence

dence would dispeople the World ; and wou'd leave little room for God's Patience, or Man's Repentance : Such immediate Punishments wou'd also put too great a Force on free Agents, exclude in a great measure *moral* Choice, and consequently destroy Virtue.

Q. Is it fit that God shou'd thus obtrude himself on Men ? A. No.

Q. Did God take these Measures, wou'd there not be almost perpetual Ratlings of Thunder over some great Cities ? A. Yes.

Q. Wou'd not those who escaped be ready to think themselves Thunder-proof, or Innocent ? A. Yes.

Q. And wou'd not others be ready to conclude against a future Judgment, if Vengeance was frequently executed here ? A. Yes.

Q. Yet has not God, in the Course of his Providence, often manifested his Displeasure against Sin and Wickedness, in a remarkable Manner ? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *third* Objection ? A. The Unsuccessfulness of the Righteous, and the Prosperities of the wicked, even in bad Causes.

Q. How is this Objection answered ? A. That it is no more easy to determine what *Prosperity* is, than who are good or wicked. A wicked Man's Goods are all gilded Misfortunes ; his Injoyments may be all insipid to him ; or in the midst of them his Mind may be disturb'd, his Heart rack'd, his Conscience tor-
tur'd.

Q. If a wicked Man's Injoyments lead him into more Sin, are they real Blessings to him?

A. No.

Q. Are they not rather the Beginning of his Punishment? A. Yes.

Q. Suppose him capable of being reclaimed by Favours, may his Injoyments be a Blessing? A. Yes.

Q. But in Case he is incapable of Amendment by such Favours, does he, or can he prosper? A. No.

Q. And when good Men prosper not, is it not often in Cases where they are scrambling for the Happiness of the wicked? A. Yes.

Q. And may it not be a Kindness to them, when in these Cases, God denies them Success? A. Yes.

Q. For, may not want of Success, even in a just Cause, do a righteous Man more good than Success wou'd; and so be a more real Prosperity? A. Yes.

Q. If the Cause only was to be considered, wou'd not Providence always favour a righteous Cause? A. Yes.

Q. But since *Persons* also come into the Account, have just Men any Claim to Protection and Success any farther than will turn to their real good? A. No.

Q. Can they wisely desire Success any further? A. No.

Q. May not also some vicious Men perform some

some laudable Actions, which God may see fit to reward with some temporal Prosperities? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *fourth* Objection? A. Such disproportionate and terrible Calamities as drowning the whole World; burning whole Cities, Men, Women, Children &c.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. The Incorrigenableness of Sinners sufficiently justifies God: And the Necessity of new Methods to deter Men from Sin, to reform the World, and to keep Religion alive in it, shews these to be Dispensations of Wisdom and Goodness, as well as of Justice.

Q. But why do Children suffer with their guilty Parents? A. To deter future Parents from the like Iniquities.

Q. Besides, had the Children been spared without any Parents, or with wicked ones, wou'd not their Infelicity in Living have been greater than a quick and sudden Death? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *fifth* Objection? A. The Eternity of the Punishments of the wicked, which seem disproportionate to temporal Sin.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. That there is no Ground to blame God, unless that he *made immortal Spirits*; which are his most noble Works: Or, that he *puts them upon Tryal*; which is surely becoming his Wisdom; or, that he *does not annihilate them, and so destroy his own Work, when Men become incurably wicked*; which wou'd
be

80 *The Christian Catechism.*

be a Reproach to his Wisdom in making them; and to his Justice, by subjecting Men unequally wicked to equal Punishments: Or, that he does not *prevent their Misery*, by curing and reclaiming them irresistibly against their Will; which is inconsistent with their Nature, and wou'd render their Reason in moral Cases useless, destroy their Liberty, and leave no Room for Virtue.

Q. If Sinners suffer no more than the natural and necessary Consequences of their own wilful Sins; is it God who makes Men miserable, or they destroy themselves? A. They certainly destroy themselves.

Q. Does not God also give Men fair warning of their Danger? A. Yes.

Q. And also allow them all needful Help to escape? A. Yes.

Q. Do not earthly Kings and Magistrates frequently imprison Criminals for the whole remaining Part of Life, without any Disparagement to their Justice? A. Yes.

V. Objections to the GOODNESS of Providence.

Q. Which is the *first* and general Objection? A. The real *Evils* which are in the World, and the Defect of *Good* in it.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. That particular Evils, conducing to the good, of the whole, change their Nature, and become a real Good. Nor can there be a Deficiency

The Christian Catechism. 81

cy of Good, when every Part is contri-
g to the Perfection of the whole.

Are not *little Evils* and Infelicities on-
e Object of Diversion and Laughter?
es.

And when one ludicrous Misfortune gives
h and Entertainment to a thousand Spec-
s, does not the Good over-balance the
A. Yes.

Do they not also render Men cautious
oid Misfortunes which wou'd only ex-
them to Laughter? A. Yes.

And do not *greater Infelicities* in one
r or Family excite Compassion in Num-
of adjacent Towns and Families? A.

Since God has so exquisitely indued Men
Sensations and Passions, corresponding
th these Sorts or Degrees of Evils, is
ermitting the Objects of them an Ar-
nt for a foreseeing and a kind Provi-
. A. Yes.

Which is the *second* Objection? A.
the Earth has so many Evils in it, as
nder Life not worth wishing for, or ac-
g.

How is this Objection answered? A.
nying the Truth of it; in regard Life,
st Men, is so sweet and desirable, that
will give up every Thing to save it.

So then tho' Earth be comparatively
perfect Habitation, is it not, upon the
whole,

82 *The Christian Catechism.*

whole, desirable and delightful? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not an Instance therefore of Goodness to plant Men upon it? A. Yes.

Q. Does the Goodness of Providence require this Earth to be a perfect Region?

A. No.

Q. What does *absolute Goodness* require?

A. Promoting the good and Perfection of the whole Universe in general.

Q. But what is that *Relative Goodness* which hath for its Object Men upon Trial, Sinners, corrigible and capable of Happiness? A. The *Goodness of Discipline*.

Q. What does this Sort of providential Goodness require towards Men in the fore-mentioned Circumstances? A. 1. Only a tolerable Habitation, to make Life a Man's Choice. 2. So much Distinction between those who behave well or ill, as to shew the Former to be the Objects of God's Favour, and the latter of his Displeasure. 3. Patience, while they are upon Trial. 4. Preventing only such Evils as will not any way, or at any time promote Good. 5. That the Good upon the whole exceed the Evil*.

Q. Which is the *third* Objection? A. That there are so many poor miserable Wretches in the World, Slaves under and oppressed by the Rich, who yet have often as little Virtue and Merit as the Poor.

* See *Sherlock* on Providence.

The Christian Catechism. 83

Q. How is this Objection answered? **A.** At the Difference between the Rich and Poor is not so mighty as Men imagine; for the Poor enjoy the same common Blessings of Light, Air, Earth, Water; they are rewarded with Colours, and the Musick of Birds, well as the Rich; their Hunger and Thirst find a Relish to their Meat and Drink; they sleep soundly; and are free from the Anxieties attending the Pursuits of Ambition; and from the Temptations of a high and plentiful Estate: And when a Prince is used to his Palace, he has no more Pleasure in it than a beggar in his Cottage.

Q. But are not all these the lowest Sort of Amusements and Pleasures? **A.** Yes; yet they are so grateful, that for the sake of them the best Men think it worth their while to live.

Q. What may be further answered? **A.** At the worst Evils are of Mens own making: That tho' God make Men poor, yet they usually make themselves miserable, and Sin bring on their greatest Distresses.

Q. What is a full and final Answer? **A.** At poor Men are capable of Religion and true; which if they practise, and behave well in this State of Trial, they will not only be put upon a Level with, but raised above their richest Neighbours, who have behaved ill; and will remain possessed of a happy Immortality, when wicked rich Men are under the Power of the second Death.

Q. Which

84 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. Which is the *fourth* Objection? A. The various Afflictions and Calamities which befall good Men, the Friends and Servants of God, who ought to protect and bless his own Servants.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. That the best of Men have Faults enow to justify Providence in any Afflictions which befall them: And that the wise and kind Designs of God in permitting or sending Afflictions leave good Men no Ground of Displeasure against God; nor any thing for which to be angry at Men, but their Sins.

Q. What other Ends do the Afflictions of good Men answer? A. They give them an Occasion to exercise and improve *Submission* and other Virtues, which will render them still more acceptable to the Deity.

Q. What does Submission include? A. Approbation of what God does, rational Consent to it, and waiting in Hope for a good Issue.

Q. Tho' nothing can change the Nature of *Pain*, and make it easy and pleasant; yet will not the Persuasion of a good Providence ordering all for the best, fortify the Minds of good Men, and inable them better to bear *Pain*? A. Yes.

Q. And if the Mind grow stronger, does it not proportionably make the Affliction and *Pain* grow less? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *fifth* Objection? A. That

God does not hear and answer Prayers.

is this Objection answered? A. s of the Upright are always God's and in Cases where he does not particular Requests, it is in greater and for their greater Good, that them.

very wise and good Man desires e him what is truly good for him, ou'd be so blind or imperfect in not to see or ask it: So is it not d and general Desire of all good God wou'd *deny* them whatever them, and wou'd tend to their ho' they shou'd be so weak and ed as to wish and pray for it? A.

eny then those Petitions, is it not of God's Goodness? A. Yes.

ch is the *sixth* Objection? A. The ite Infants are in, and their being ain and Crying; and that yet they and pleased with Rattles and such gs, as seem below the Notice of eatures.

is this Objection answered? A. ssness of Infants is a proper Object mpassion and Care of Parents; tant Converse with them, and Ex- der Pains about them render them to their Parents, and is a Founda-
H tion

tion of their future Welfare.

Q. Besides, is not a fine and tender Boy which must be liable to the Impressions Pain, the fittest Habitation for a rational Soul?
A. Yes.

Q. Are not the Cries of Children a proper Way of begging Help?
A. Yes.

Q. And does not their being pleased with Toys shew a Capacity above the Brutes; is it not a Specimen of Admiration and Curiosity, which are the Mother of all Philosophy and Improvements in Knowledge?
A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *seventh* Objection?
 The Permission or inflicting of Death, which fills every Place with Grief and Tears, and tears asunder the strongest and tenderest Bands of Friendship and Love.

Q. How is this Objection answered?
 That Death, tho' brought into the World by Sin, turns to Mankind's Advantage, as it is the Soul's Release from a Prison; as it shews Men the Evil of Sin; as it is a Monitor to Men to prepare for a coming World; as it puts a Stop to the Progress of Sin, and prevents immortal Enmities.

Q. What other Advantage flows from Death?
A. It makes room for successive Generations of Men to come upon Trial: At this Rising up of a new Set of Actors on the Stage of the World, more beautifies the Scenario of Providence than if the first Set never went off.

Q. Which is the *eighth* Objection?

The numberless, painful, noisom and lingering Diseases which are spreading in the World.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. Providence is not to be taxed for these; but the Intemperance and irregular Passions of Men.

Q. Yet have not those Diseases their Use?

A. Yes.

Q. To what good Purposes are they subservient? A. They inance the Pleasure of Health, and occasion the Joy of Recovery, and the Congratulation of Friends: They correct the Vices of bad Men, and improve the Virtues of good Men: They are an edifying Spectacle to those in Health; and also employ the Skill of great Numbers to find out and administer proper Remedies.

Q. Which is the *ninth* Objection? A. The dreadful Calamities arising from Wars, Famines, Pestilences, Earthquakes, &c. seem to reproach the Goodness of God.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. Wars are Men's Doings, not God's. Famines usually arise from Wars, as wars from Mens Lusts. These and other Calamities are a fit Scourge of Pride, Idleness, Luxury and Contention.

Q. Wou'd not Frugality in a Time of Plenty usually prevent Famine in Times of Scarcity? A. Yes.

Q. And what helps much to abate it? A. Commerce with other Countries opened by Navigation.

88 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. What Advantage to Men attends War, Pestilence, Earthquakes, &c? **A.** They dispatch Life quick, and with less Pain than dying Piece-meal by Distempers.

Q. Does not Providence also provide Supplies to answer this extraordinary waste of human Lives? **A.** Yes.

Q. What other Ends do these great and dreadful Events answer? **A.** 1. They keep the World awake and attentive, and prevent universal Dulness. 2. The Reports and Records of them tend to inspire Men with Reverence, Fear and Gratitude. 3. They give a Relish for the Blessings of Peace, Plenty, Health and Safety.

Q. Which is the *tenth* Objection? **A.** The Calamities falling upon innocent Animals; and the Cruelty of some in devouring Others; a Cruelty planted in their Nature by the Creator.

Q. How is this Objection answered? **A.** The Destruction of some Animals is the Preservation of others; and Providence has provided a Supply of Super-numeraries for this End.

Q. In case Fish and Land-Animals did not prey one upon another, what would be the Consequence? **A.** Both Water and Land would soon be over-stock'd, Provisions would fail, and All would die.

Q. Have not Creatures of Prey more Pleasure in Hunting and Victory, than the Cr

The Christian Catechism. 89

ures prey'd upon have Pain in dying? A. Yes.

Q. And has not every Creature more Pleasure in Life, when all is summ'd up, than it feels Pain in either Life or Death? A. Yes.

Q. Does not this take off the Objection against the Goodness of God in suffering their violent Deaths? A. Yes.

Q. Can it be called *Cruelty* in Birds, Beasts and Fishes of Prey, when they devour Creatures of other Species? A. No, but only a principle of Self-preservation.

Q. What does *Cruelty* imply? A. Injustice.

Q. What does *Injustice* suppose? A. A knowledge of right and wrong.

Q. Can *Cruelty* then be the Deformity and vice of any but rational Beings? A. No.

Q. As to accidental Hurts of innocent Creatures; if a Man shoot at a Flock of Pigeons, might the Laws of Motion be interrupted, lest any one Pigeon shou'd be maimed, which is not killed outright? A. No.

Q. Or, ought the Liberty of Action to be taken from every Boy, who attempts to break the Leg of an innocent Bird? A. No.

Q. Or, ought a Judge to be struck Dumb, when He offers to pronounce an unjust Sentence? A. No.

Q. Wou'd not interrupting the settled Laws in the *material* and *moral* World have Inconveniences which wou'd far over-balance

any particular Mischiefs which can flow from their regular Progress? A. Yes.

Q. Are then these particular Mischiefs a Ground of Impeachment of the Goodness of Providence? A. No.

Q. Which is the *eleventh* Objection? That the Clouds are govern'd to Men's disadvantage; the High Roads being often damaged by Rain and Snow to the Detriment of Travellers, and the great Inconvenience of Man and Beast.

Q. How is this Objection answered? Roads wou'd be insufferably dusty if never watered; And when made bad by Rain, the poor Men find Employment for their Time, and rich Men for their Money. If Travellers were never wet, what Occasion wou'd be for Coats and Boots!

Q. Does not then what are called the *works* of Providence, when examin'd, shew the Wisdom, Goodness and Perfection of it? A. Yes.

Q. Beside, shou'd the Agency of the Governor of the World always interpose to guide material Beings with minute Exactness, what wou'd be the Consequence? There wou'd be an End of all Natural Philosophy, that delightful Study. 2. The noblest Faculty of Man's Mind wou'd want Objects and Exercise. 3. The Plan of the material World wou'd seem very imperfect, *compared with the unsearchable Contrivance*

finite Art which now appear in it.

Q. As God does, not need to mend his own Work; so wou'd not Men quite mar it, if they attempt to mend it? A. Yes.

Q. If therefore there be *any Evil* in these and such like Events, are they not the necessary Consequence of the wisest and most perfect Scheme? A. Yes.

Q. And by their conducing to the good of the whole, do they really become good? A. Yes.

Q. Is it then fit that the great Machine of the material World shou'd be put out of Order, and the Springs of Motion stopped in it, or receive new and irregular Directions, only to gratify the Humour and Caprice of conceited and Atheistical Men? A. No.

distinct from it self the *Considerer*; a considers it as the *Property*, or Hab the *Considerer*.

Q. Does not this support the of that Language, *My Body*? A.

Q. Which is a second way of pr Soul a distinct Being from the Body? is something in us which *moves* th directs, determines and over-rules its which moving, directing Cause m distinct from the Body moved and di

Q. Is not this as plain, as that vernor of a Ship's Motions is a Beir from the Ship? A. Yes.

Q. Which is a third way? A. sensibly two *distinct Interests* in 1 fleshly and sensual; the other rat spiritual; which must be the Intere distinct Beings or Substances.

Q. Does not the rational Principle of check and controul the Dictates an tions of the Body? A. Yes.

Q. Can it then be the same with dy? A. No.

Q. Which is the fourth way? A. does not see, hear, taste, smell *all* all sensible Objects are by certain (Pipes convey'd to one common Sea Head; which shews there is one Bei dwells there, and which attends t *jects* convey'd to it; distinguishes t *forms* a Variety of Judgments abo

The Christian Catechism. 95

Q. Is it not then the same Being which sees by the Eyes, hears by the Ears, feels by the Touch, &c. A. Yes.

Q. Is any Part of the Body capable of this? A. No.

Q. Are the Eyes, Ears and other Organs any more than Canals to admit Light, Sound, and other small Bodies thro' them? A. No.

Q. Are they not then of a distinct Nature from and far inferior to the Being which perceives and judges of all these. A. Yes.

Q. Which is a fifth way of proving the Soul to be a distinct Being from the Body? A. That cutting off a Limb from the Body does not diminish the Faculties of the Soul.

Q. But wou'd it not have that Effect, if the Soul was not quite a distinct Being from the Body? A. Yes.

Q. Now what is the great Inference to be drawn hence? A. That if the Soul be a distinct Being from the Body, it does not depend upon the Body for its Existence or Operation; but can subsist without it *.

Q. If

* *Objection.* Q. When the Eyes are Shut, the Ears stop'd, when a Man is in a Swoon, or in old Age, and the Faculty of Seeing, Hearing, &c. is weakened, or wholly taken away, does not this shew that the Faculty is corporeal, or does depend on the Body? A. No, it rather shews the Contrary; for it is not the *Power* or Faculty which is lost, but only the *Act* of Seeing, Hearing, &c. is suspended or weakened by an Impediment in the Body. Take away the outward Impediment, open the Eye-Lids, repair the Eyes,

Q. If it *can* subsist without the Body, must it not be intended by the Creator that it *shall*? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *second* natural or metaphysical Proof of the Soul's Immortality? A. That the Soul is *not material*, therefore not divisible, therefore not liable to Dissolution, perishing or dying; but will always live.

Q. How can you prove that the Soul is not *mere Matter*, or Immaterial? A. Its noble Powers and excellent Operations; its thinking, reasoning, reflecting, willing, remembering, acting, shew it to be of a differing Nature, and of higher Excellency than Body or Matter*.

Q. Which

Eyes, clear the Avenues to the Brain, and the Soul sees, hears, &c. as well as ever. So that the *Faculty* remains, only the Operation is impeded; which is an additional Proof that the Soul is a *distinct Being* from the Body, and tho' *limited* by it, does not depend upon it. As a Man in a Room made dark, is not able to see Objects from without; but open the Windows, clear the Roads, and he sees all Things clearly. Bodily Organs bring the Ideas in, but when brought in, Reflection can be carried on without them; as a Building stands, when the Scaffolds are taken down.

* If Matter be capable of Thought, either

1. All Matter must think. Or,
2. Thought must arise from the peculiar Modes or Properties of some Matter. Or,
3. It must be a Faculty superadded to Matter. All which are absurd and false.

1. All Matter does not think. It is contrary to our *Knowledge* to suppose it does; for if a Stone, a Tree, a Hand think all our Senses and Faculties deceive us, and we know N
this



The Christian Catechism. 97.

Which is the *first* Branch of this Proof?
That the Soul has a Power of ascending
all material Objects, and of forming
Conceptions of God, Angels and other
material Beings.

Must it not then be it self a Being a-
Matter? A. Yes.

I

Q. What

which as it wou'd reproach our Maker, so it is a
no one will affirm. It is also contrary to our *Feel-*
we all feel ourselves think in the Head, not in the
or Heels. Moreover, if all Matter cou'd think and
it must be *essential* to it; and then we must always
ought in *Time past*, and must always think in *Time*
; and so we shou'd stumble unawares upon the Soul's
ality.

Thought and Reasoning does not arise from any Mode
erty of Matter. All the known Properties of Mat-
Solidity, Figure, Colour, Mobility. Thought and
ing cannot arise from any of them. The only Ef-
fy can produce are to make Matter greater or less, rare
; to be of one Shape or another, to appear red, green,
be moved or rest; which are Ideas quite distinct
inking. They are also the *Effects* of Thought, and
e cannot be the *Cause* of it.

Can Matter do any thing at all? A. No.

Isn't not all Action then performed in, by, or thro'
be performed by an *immaterial Cause*? A. Yes.

When a Man moves and acts, is it not for some *Rea-*
l with some End? A. Yes.

But is Matter capable of the Ideas of Reasons and
A. No.

Does not Matter also *resist* all Motion or any Change
? A. Yes.

Isn't it not then be an immaterial Cause which over-
has *Resistance*, *essential* to all Matter? A. Yes.

Q. For

Q. What further Power has the Soul?

A. Power of abstracting from Matter, or separating what is peculiar to Individuals, conceiving general Ideas, and Ideas of Relations, Agreements and Disagreements, Lines, Figures, and their Properties.

Q. Can Matter thus abstract from Matter? **A.** No.

Q. W

Q. For can any thing produce an Effect which it re
A. No.

Q. Yet is not the very *Resistance* of Matter a Cause and Means of all the Effects produced by it? **A.** Y

Q. Is not this a farther Proof of its being governed by a living, immaterial Agent? **A.** Yes.

Q. Again, when Men move themselves in a certain terminated Manner upon *Words* spoke, or *Writings* sent another, can these Motions be mechanical, or by material Agency? **A.** No.

Q. Do not Words and Actions sometimes raise *Laziness* or *Anger*, when they have nothing pleasant or rude in themselves being misapprehended? **A.** Yes.

Q. Must not this arise then from some immaterial Cause the Object of the Understanding? **A.** Yes.

Q. Are not all Thoughts, Ideas, Notions, whatever the Objects of them, immaterial? **A.** Yes.

Q. Must not then the Soul, in which they reside, be immaterial, and consequently immortal? **A.** Yes.

Q. Moreover, can any Moment be fixed, at what degree of Fineness Matter shall begin to think? **A.** I

Q. Is Bread, Flesh, Beer, when chewed, digested, reduced into Chyle, Blood, Spirits, united to the Body, in more Capacity to think and reason, than when in their former State? **A.** No.

Q. Can Flame any more think than Lead? **A.**

The Christian Catechism. 99

Q. Which is the *second* Branch of this roof? A. That tho' the Ideas of the Soul be so innumerable many, and so infinitely extended, yet it is able to keep its Ideas distinct and unmingled, both of similar and contrary Things.

Q. Is not this a Capacity quite above Matter? A. Yes.

I 2

Q. Has

3. The superadding a Faculty of thinking to a System of Matter, is either to suppose it not Matter, or that an immaterial Soul is united to it.

Q. Farther, if the Body or Matter cou'd think and reason, wou'd not every Part be capable of it; or if Thinking be essential to Matter, must it not be essential to every part? A. Yes.

Q. Then wou'd not the Brain, the chief Part or Organ of the Body be divisible into a thousand thinking Beings? A. Yes.

Q. But is this absurd and false? A. Yes.

Q. Must not the Soul then be a Being distinct from the Body, and from all Matter? A. Yes.

Q. Again, if no one Particle of Matter by it self can think and reason, will putting together a thousand Particles of unthinking Matter produce a thinking Being? A. No.

Q. Again, is not the Brain and the whole Body in a perpetual Flux, Waste and Change? A. Yes.

Q. In case then it cou'd think and reflect, wou'd it be the same thinking Being one Year it was the former? A. No.

Q. Then, cou'd any Man, being not the Same, remember his past Actions, or be chargeable with past Guilt, or be rewardable for former Virtues? A. No, For he wou'd not be the same Man.

Q. But do we not feel ourselves the *same Persons* we were in Years past? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not then evident, that the Soul, which hath
this

100 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. Has the Soul also a Power of perusing material Impressions of Images brought to the Brain? **A.** Yes.

Q. Must not what peruses Matter be both distinct from and superior to Matter? **A.** Yes.

Q. Is not this as clear as that the *Composer* or *Reader* must be a Being distinct from and above the *Book* he composes or reads? **A.** Yes.

Q. Which

this Sense of Sameness, is not in a constant Change of Substances? **A.** Yes.

Q. Can it then be Body, or any Part of the Body? **A.** No.

Q. If it be not Body or Matter, but immaterial, must not be indissoluble or immortal? **A.** Yes.

Q. And if the Soul, the living Agent, remain the same in all the Changes of the System of Matter, to which it is united; may it not also remain the same, when this System is in great Part or wholly gone? **A.** Yes.

Q. And in case the Soul has Occasion for any fine Vehicle to reside and act in, as its *Shechinah*, or sacred Habitation is it not probable That never wastes, but goes off with it at Death, and is still its Habitation or Organ? **A.** Yes.

The foregoing Arguments put into Form.

1. *Argument.* The Being which is not material is immortal; but the Soul is a Being not material, therefore is immortal.

That the Soul is not material is thus proved. The Being, which is indiscerpible, is not material. But the Soul is indiscerpible, therefore not material.

That the Soul is indiscerpible, or indivisible thus proved. The Being which has one individual Consciousness is indiscerpible; but the Soul has; Therefore, &c.

2. Which is a *third* Branch of this Proof?

A. That the Soul corrects material Appearances, or the Errors of Sense and Imagination: As when a distant Object, a Tower for Instance, appears little or round, the Soul more truly Judges it to be great or Square.

2. Which is a *fourth* Branch of this Proof?

A. That the Soul has an Ability to recollect *past Things*, at the greatest Distance,

2. *Arg.* If Consciousness (a Property of the Soul) cannot arise from any of the Properties of Matter, the conscious Soul is not a material Being, and therefore not mortal. But Consciousness cannot be the Result of any of the Properties of Matter; therefore it is not a material Being.

3. *Arg.* If the Soul have specifically different Properties from Matter, it is not Matter; but it has such; therefore it is not Matter.

That it has such differing Properties proved. If the known Properties of Matter prove it a discernible Substance, and the known Properties of Souls prove them to be indiscernible, then the Nature and Substance of the Soul and Matter are specifically different. For the Substance is known by its Properties.

4. *Arg.* If we have distinct Ideas of Thinking, and of all the Modes of Thinking, from those we have of material Substances, then they are not the same; but our Ideas of these are distinct; therefore, &c.

The Connection of the first Proposition proved. If clear and distinct Ideas are the Foundation of all Knowledge, and the Criterion of all Truth; then where we have clear and distinct Ideas of differing Properties and differing Substances, those Substances differ, and are not of the same Kind. But the Former is an allowed Maxim of Truth, therefore the Latter is true also.

More Arguments of like Nature may be formed from the Text and Notes.

See An Inquiry into the Nature of the Soul, &c.

to compare them with *Things present*, and thence to make Conjectures about what is *future*.

Q. Does not this exceed all Capacity of Matter? A. Yes.

Q. Which is a *fifth* Branch of this Proof?

A. That the Soul giveth Life, Motion, Activity, to lifeless, motionless, inactive Matter.

Q. Can it then be itself Matter? A. No.

Q. Which is a *sixth* Branch of this Proof?

A. That the Soul has a Power to invent Arts and Sciences, to dive into and improve Inventions.

Q. Does not this exceed the Capacity of Matter? A. Yes.

Q. Tho' we may not know all which is essential to Body or Matter; yet do we not know that these Powers are not essential to it? A. Yes.

Q. Which is a *seventh* Branch of this Proof?

A. That when the Soul proposeth to think seriously and closely, she abstracts her self as far as possible from the Body.

Q. Does not this shew both that She is distinct from the Body, and that probably She will be able, after Separation from the Body, and without the Use of it, to perform these Operations so peculiar to her Nature? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *third* natural Proof of the
Soul's

***The Christian Catechism.* 103.**

Immortality? A. The Life and Unity
of Soul.

Is the Soul the Principle of Life to
the Body? A. Yes.

Is it likely that the Being which gives
and therefore has Life in its Essence,
ever die? A. No.

Are not all our Faculties and Actions
of the same Faculty and Actions of *one self same*?

A. Yes*.

Does not this shew it to be perfectly
in itself? A. Yes.

Must it not then be indivisible by any
Cause? A. Yes.

Moreover, since the Soul remains the
conscious Being in Youth and in Old
Age, asleep and awake, in a Swoon and when
awakened; and its Capacities of thinking the
same, is not this a strong Argument that it
exists and enjoys its thinking Capacity,
when the Body is dissolved? A. Yes†.

Q. And

Is it not *one Power* which sees thro' the Eyes, as
the Sun's Glasses; which hears thro' the Ears, as the Soul's
Listening Room; and which moves by the Feet, as the
Staff, to walk by? A. Yes.

What is *Consciousness*? A. In the most strict and ex-
act of the Word, it signifies (neither a Capacity of
thinking, nor actual thinking, but) the reflex Act by which
that I think; and that my Thoughts and Actions
are my own and not anothers.

Is not *Consciousness* a single, indivisible Power? A. Yes.
Is not then the Soul in which this Power subsists,
an indivisible Being? A. Yes.

Q. D

Q. And if all intermediate Changes of the Body, even its constant Efflux, make no Change in the Soul; is it not probable that Death, or a Failure of the whole Body, will make no Change in it? **A.** Yes.

S E C T. III.

Q. **H**OW many are the MORAL Proofs of the Soul's Immortality, or its existing after the Death of the Body? **A.** They are such as are drawn from, 1. The Nature of God. 2. The Office of Conscience. 3. Mens Desires and Expectations of Immortality. 4. Mens Hopes and Fears of Futurity. 5. Its Necessity and Importance to Mankind. 6. Universal Belief of it. 7. Scripture Testimony. 8. The Absurdities of the Doctrine of Annihilation.

Q. Which is the *first* moral Proof of the Soul's Immortality, or its future and eternal

Q. Do we not even *feel* ourselves to be one conscious Being? **A.** Yes.

Q. But if the Soul was material, wou'd it not consist of innumerable conscious Beings, as Matter does of innumerable Parts? **A.** Yes.

Q. Since then the Soul is naturally One, and absolutely indivisible, does not this prove its natural Immortality? **A.** Yes.

Note. Consciousness *ascertains* to our selves our personal Identity, but does not *constitute* or make it; for it *pre-supposeth* it: As knowledge in any other Case does not *constitute* the Truth which it pre-supposeth.

Butler's Anal. p. 391.
Existence?

istence? A. That drawn from the Nature and Perfections of God.

Q. What is the *first* Form of this Argument? A. It is unreasonable to suppose that God will utterly cut off and suffer to be extinguished such *rational Beings* for whose sake he created the material Universe.

Q. Must not the material Universe be made for the sake of rational Creatures, who can use, and delight in it? A. Yes.

Q. For can we conceive any other consistent sign why God rear'd the material Frame, but for the Use and Improvement of his rational Creatures? A. No.

Q. Is it not *impious* to suppose he did it for his own solace Himself? A. Yes.

Q. And is it not *absurd* to suppose he expended all his Works to the View and Information of None? A. Yes.

Q. What Conclusion may we then draw? That the whole material World shall soon be extinguished, than rational Souls die, whose sake it was erected.

Q. What is the *second* Form of this Argument? A. That if God design'd rational Spirits to see and contemplate his Works, he cannot suppose he only designed to shew them the *Outside* of Things. Or, that he would raise in them a Longing to see *more*, than their seeing a little, and then mock the hopes he had raised by a Disappointment.

2. But must not Souls be continued in Being.

Q. How does the *Goodness* of God require it? A. As it is inconsistent with governing Goodness to extinguish Men in Death, or reduce them to their primitive Nothing, whose prevailing Aim it is to please him; tho' they do not arrive at perfect Obedience *.

Q. How does the *Holiness* of God require it? A. As it seems incongruous to this Character of God always to suffer such a Prevalency of Sin and Unrighteousness over Piety and Virtue, as appears in the great and many Tyrannies erected in the World; as well as in numberless private Impieties and Injuries †.

takes, Frauds and other Abuses, Disappointments, Solitude for a Family, and other Anxieties wear away *Manhood*; a Load of Infirmities and Sorrows sink the *Old Man* to the Grave.

This seems to require a future State; since many a Man, at the Close of Life, if it was offered him over again on the Terms of going thro' all the Evil as well as Good of Life, wou'd scarce accept it.

Q. Will not then a wise and reasonable Governor of the World bring on a better State, where virtuous Souls shall have a Share of Good far out-balancing all their Evils? A. Yes.

* Q. Will any good Father or King suffer their Children and Subjects to go off without any Reward for faithful Service and patient Suffering for his Sake? A. No.

† Q. Is it not inconsistent for a wise, just, good and holy God always to suffer Reason, Truth, Virtue and Right to truckle under Unrighteousness, Error and Sin? A. Yes.

Q. Must there not then be a future State, where Reason, Truth and Goodness will recover their rightful Empire? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *second* moral Proof of the Immortality of the Soul? A. That taken from the Office and Power of Conscience.

Q. Is not every Man indued with Conscience, or a Power to Judge within himself of his own Actions? A. Yes. John. viii. 9. *Being convicted in their own Consciences they went out.* Rom. ii. 14, 15. *Their Conscience bearing them Witness, and their Thoughts accusing or excusing.*

Q. Does Conscience produce Hope or Fear of both an invisible God, and an invisible World? A. Yes.

Q. By its acquitting or condemning, and by the Satisfaction or Uneasiness attending its Sentence, does Conscience carry in it the very Beginnings (as well as the Fore-bodings) of future Happiness or Misery? A. Yes. John iii. 20, 21. *If our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all Things. If our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.* Mat. xvii. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 12.

Q. Is it not then highly reasonable to believe, that God, who has indued Man with his Power, Conscience, will cause the Soul to exist in a future State, where it shall have Sentence and Portion conformable to the Dictates of Conscience? A. Yes.

Q. And is not the *Credibility* only, or the reasonableness of expecting a future State and the Immortality of the Soul, without

strict Demonstration, sufficient to determine every Man's Practise, and to answer all Purposes of Religion? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *third* moral Proof of Soul's Immortality? A. The great Desires and strong Expectations Men have to live after Death.

Q. Is it not certain Fact that most Men possessed of these Desires and Expectations, are under a necessary, unavoidable Concern about what is to come to pass hereafter? A. Yes.

Q. Nay, is not continued Existence the Chief Desire of the Soul, and the Foundation of all other Desires and Endeavours? Yes; in regard loving, desiring and seeking after any thing else is a Consequence of Love and Desire of Existing.

Q. Do not Men's ordering things to be done after they are dead, their erecting Monuments, their Solicitude about Posterity, &c. indicate they desire and expect to be *something* and *somewhere* after Death? A. Yes; *mere Nothing* cannot have a Concern about any thing.

Q. Is it in any one's Power to wish for a total Death, but theirs who dread the Consequences of an ill-spent Life? A. No.

Q. Did any other Men ever conquer the Desire and Love of Existing? A. No.

Q. Does not this shew it to be a *Natural* and a *Noble* Desire? A. Yes.

Q. If it be a *Natural* Desire, what follows

The Christian Catechism.

III

lows? A. That it was planted in Men by the great Author of Nature.

Q. And wou'd He plant such a Desire and Solicitude in Men, if there was no Ground for it, and he intended never to satisfy it?

A. No; for it is repugnant to his Wisdom, Sincerity and Goodness to delude his Creatures with a View of a State which will never be.

Q. If it be a just, reasonable and *noble* Desire, what follows? A. That it will be gratified under a reasonable and most perfect Government.

Q. Or, if it be not natural and necessary, but *aristh from Reasoning*, what does this shew? A. That it is a Constitution of Things right and fit, and what will certainly take place; since God, who is supreme Reason will ultimately answer all the reasonable Desires of his Creatures.

Q. Farther, Do not the *most virtuous Souls* most desire Immortality; or do not these Desires grow strongest in good Men? A. Yes.

Q. And can a good God defeat the Desires of true Virtue and Goodness? A. No; for if Virtue and Goodness (the Image and Offspring of the Deity) beget the most raised Ideas and Desires of Immortality; God himself, the Original of all Virtue, must be the Author of those Ideas and Desires.

Q. Again, Have we not necessarily *interminable Views*: Or, does not the Mind of Man

Man aspire after *intellectual Improvements* without End? A. Yes.

Q. What does this shew? A. That the Soul is designed for Eternity; for it is unreasonable to suppose that a rational Nature, capable of Life, and endless Improvements shou'd ever die: And it is a Reproach to the Goodness of God, to suppose that a Soul *thirsting after Knowledge*, but who wants Health, Company, Books, Leisure, &c. shou'd never have Opportunity and Means to quench that noble Thirst.

Q. After we have obtained a *Taste of Truth and Knowledge*, and see a few of the Wonders of the Universe, wou'd it not be a killing Thought, to have all our Views dashed at once, and we must bid an everlasting Adieu to all the unsearchable Works of God? A. Yes.

Q. But is this reconcileable to the Rectitude of God's Government? A. No.

Q. Again, Is not Man always *gaining*, as well as seeking, *more Knowledge*? A. Yes.

Q. Is not this a Mark of Eternity? A. Yes; for as the Boundlessness of God's Works is a proper and adequate Object for its eternal Progress; so it is contrary to eternal Reason, that the more a Soul advances in Knowledge, and the more perfect it becomes, the nearer it shou'd be to Nothing.

Q. Yet wou'd not this Absurdity take place, if the Soul was ever to die? A. Yes.

Q. Is

Q. Is it not then certain that the longer it lives, and the wiser it grows, the less capable it is of Dying? **A.** Yes *.

Q. Which is the *fourth* moral Proof of a future State, or the Soul's Immortality? **A.** Mens Hopes and Fears of such a State.

Q. Are not such Hopes and Fears necessary to Mens subsisting with Comfort and Safety in his present State? **A.** Yes.

Q. Are they not then an Instrument of God's moral Government, and a Means of keeping the World in Order? **A.** Yes.

* The Argument appears as strong in the Case of *improved Virtue*, as *improved Knowledge*. For if Mens Capacity of apprehending, pursuing and attaining a greater Perfection of both Knowledge and Goodness than is attained, or is attainable, in the present Life, is a clear Proof of a future State; then *actual Improvements* in both adds Strength to the Proof of such a State, where the Soul survives the Body, and where it will reach that Perfection God has made it capable of, and which it is in pursuit of.

After a Soul has indured many Hardships in the Course of Religion and Virtue, has been cultivating Acquaintance with the Deity, practising his Laws, lamenting its Defects, praying for Help, has hoped for a better State, denied itself for Religion and Virtue's sake, often appeal'd to God under Injuries, and even felt itself approach towards a more perfect Manner of Existence, then to have all dashed at once, and sink into eternal Nothing; this is utterly inconsistent with the Perfections of God, and therefore can never be.

Nay, if the Soul was not immortal, but our whole Being must turn to Dust, and feed Trees, Plants and other inferior Creatures; the State of Beasts wou'd, in some Respects, if not upon the whole, be preferable to that of Men; as their Pleasures are more free, and their Pains clear of uneasy Reflections. But this is a Degradation of Man which God will never suffer.

Q. But wou'd a wise and good God so constitute the Frame of Man, that the *Belief of a Lie*, or Hope and Fear of imaginary Good and Evil shou'd be necessary to Mens living in Society as reasonable Beings? A. No.

Q. Which is the *fifth* moral Proof of a future State, or the Soul's Immortality? A. That this Doctrine of a future State and the soul's Existence in it is of the greatest Necessity and Importance to the Interest of Mankind.

Q. For wou'd not Man's *Happiness be less*, if he had no future Prospects? A. Yes.

Q. If in a *prosperous Condition*, wou'd not Reason be his Torment, to see Death like a dark Cloud approaching to put an utter End to it? A. Yes.

Q. If in an *afflicted Condition*, wou'd not Reason be equally his Torment, to think it wou'd never be exchanged for a better? A. Yes.

Q. Wou'd there not also be *less Religion and Virtue* amongst Men, if the Hopes and Fears of a future State were taken away? A. Yes.

Q. Since Religion and Virtue preserve the

* As the Passions of *Hope* and *Fear* arise directly from the Operation of *Conscience*; as they are consequent upon *Expectation*, and Hope implies *Desire*; and as Hope and Fear are the great Spring of Virtue, and Restraint on Vice this Article may be reduced to the second, third or fifth Proof; and requires no farther Enlargement.

Q. Q.

The Christian Catechism. 115

Order of the moral World, and are so necessary to the Welfare of Mankind; must not the Belief of a future State (so great a Support to Religion and Virtue) be a necessary and important Principle? A. Yes.

Q. And must not so necessary and important a Principle have a real Object for its foundation? A. Yes *.

Q. More-

* There are other Principles of Virtue, or Checks to vice besides the Doctrine of Immortality; as temporal Interest, Credit, Decency, Honour, the Beauty of Virtue, the natural Consequences of Virtue and Vice, Fear of present evil, Benevolence and natural Conscience. But all insufficient without the Belief of a future State.

Q. Why is not *temporal Interest* a sufficient Principle? A. Because Unrighteousness hath often a long and prosperous run.

Q. Why is not *Reputation*? A. Because in a Circle of dissipated Acquaintance, and in a debauched Age, Vice grows reputable.

Q. Why is not *Decency*? A. Because this can only support the *Shews* of Virtue and Piety, but not the Reality of them.

Q. Why not *Honour*? A. Because not always Truth and Right, but Custom, Fashion and Opinion is the Standard of that.

Q. Why is not the *Beauty of Virtue*, and the *Deformity of Vice*? A. Because Men do not always choose and practice what they see lovely and approve; nor always shun what is foul.

Q. Why is not the *natural Consequences* of Virtue and Vice? A. Because these do not always follow; and when they do, not always in a Degree proportioned to Virtue and Vice. Besides, not only *Reason*, but the *Passions*, Hope and Fear, ought to be lifted up the side of Virtue.

Q. Why is not *Fear of present Evils*? A. Because this
pro.

Q. Does this Argument suppose the Truth of the holy Scriptures? A. Yes, and well it may, for they have all the Characters of Truth which any antient Books in the World have.

Q. Moreover, did not Jesus Christ and his Apostles give all desirable Evidence of their divine Mission? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not highly reasonable then that we give Credit to the concurring Testimony of Christ and his Apostles? A. Yes.

Q. Besides numerous plain Texts, what is a Demonstration of a Life after this, clearer, and more level to the Capacities of all Mankind, than the finest and most subtle Arguments which can be drawn from the immaterial Nature of the Soul, its Powers of Reflection, and its Independancy on the Body? A. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead; and his Ascension into Heaven.

everlasting Life, and one to Shame and everlasting Contempt.

The Writings of the New Testament are more express still for a future State, and the Immortality of the Soul. As Mat. x. 28. *Men are not able to kill the Soul, Joy'n.* Luke xvi. 22, 23. *Lazarus was carried by Angels. In Hell the rich Man lit up his Eyes.* Luke xxiii. 42. Acts vii 59. *Into thy Hands I commend my Spirit &c.* Luke xxiii. 43. *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* 2 Cor. xii. 2. *Whether in the Body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the Body.* Phil. i. 23. *Having a desire to depart, and be with Christ.* 1 Pet. iv. 10. *Let them will after according to the Will of God, unto the keeping of their Souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.*

Q. What

What is a farther admirable Demon-
n of the Soul's Immortality? A. The
ption of the Soul, and its Reconcili-
o God by the Undertaking of Jesus
*Rom. viii. 10. The Spirit is Life, be-
if righteousness. Heb. xii. 23. To the
of the Just made perfect.*

Must not the Soul be nobler than all
Beings, which was redeemed by the
of God's dear Son? A. Yes.

Which is the *eighth* moral Proof of the
Immortality? A. That taken from
bsurdities attending the contrary Doc-
of Annihilation.

May not numerous Absurdities be drawn
the foregoing Proofs? A. Yes.

But which one may suffice? A. That
doctrine of Annihilation wou'd put the
ally virtuous or vicious into an equal
of Non-existence.

But can this never happen under the
righteous and holy Government of God?
2.

C H A P. IV.

Proofs of a future JUDGMENT.

S E C T. I.

Q. WHICH is the *first* Argument for a future Judgment? **A.** That Man is plainly an accountable Being, capable of being judged, rewarded or punished.

Q. How does it appear that Man is accountable for his Actions? **A.** It appears from the Consideration of both his *Nature* and his *Condition*.

Q. How does the Consideration of the *Nature* of Man prove him accountable for his Actions? **A.** Because there is in him Understanding, or a Faculty of distinguishing good and evil, virtue and vice; and Liberty, or a Power of determining his own Actions, upon moral Motives.

Q. Is it not then highly reasonable to believe, that the great God, who gave Man Understanding, and all his Powers, will sometime or other make a grand Inquiry; how these Powers have been employ'd, and how far their Conduct has been according to the Law they were under? **A.** Yes*.

Q. How

* **Q.** Is God a moral Governor over the World? **A.** Yes
 ‡ **Q.** Wherin consists moral Government? **A.** In reward

Q. How does the Consideration of the Condition and Circumstances Men are in shew them to be accountable? A. Because they are depending Subjects and intrusted Servants.

Q. Since then Men live under God's Authority, as supreme Lord; and live upon his Bounties, as their chief Benefactor; is it not fit and becoming, that he examine in what Manner they have acknowledged his Authority, and how they have imploy'd and improv'd his Bounties and the Talents with which they have been trusted? A. Yes.

L. 2

Q. Do

good and punishing in exact Proportion to (Mens) Merit or Demerit; or, as they have followed or departed from the Law they are under.

Q. Is there not the Beginning of this righteous Administration found in this World, in the natural Course of things? A. Yes.

Q. For how is *Virtue*, as such, rewarded at present? A. It is rewarded at present in the Security and Self-approbation which follows virtuous Actions; in the Favour of all good Men, and their concurring Approbation; in the good Effect it has on our outward Affairs, and its good Influence on Society.

Q. How is *Vice*, as such, punished at present? A. It is punished in the Remorse which follows vicious Actions; (a self-condemnation, distinct from the Uneasiness at a Loss) in the Disapprobation of all just Beings; and in the ill Effects it produceth in Society.

Q. Are not these inward Feelings, whether delightful or painful, the natural Effects of Virtue or Vice, on the Mind itself? A. Yes.

Q. By this natural Connection between Virtue and Happiness; and between Vice and Misery, what Declaration does God

124 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. Do not all wise Kings and Masters thus reckon with their Subjects and Servants?

A. Yes.

Q. Are Men generally called to a strict Account in this World? A. No.

Q. Will they not therefore in another? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *second* Argument for a future Judgment? A. The Being and Powers of Conscience.

Q. Is not Conscience a Judge, which keeps a *Court of Equity*, or erects a Tribunal in every Man's own Breast? A. Yes.

Q. Has not this Power in Man an essential Relation to an higher Tribunal, or to a supreme Judge? A. Yes.

Q. Is not Conscience a Faculty Man is indued with by God as Creator; and common to *Gentiles, Jews and Christians*? A. Yes.

God, as supreme Governor, and as Author of this Connection, make? A. He declares himself on the side of Virtue.

Q. As then this State of moral Government is begun here, is it not highly probable it will be *carried to Perfection* hereafter, by a future, general Judgment? A. Yes.

Q. As an Effect of God's natural Government over the World, is what we either *enjoy* or *suffer* put very much in our own Power, as *Pleasure* and *Pain* are the Consequences of our own Actions? A. Yes.

Q. That therefore future Pleasure or Pain should be the Consequences of our Conduct here is not this uniform and *analogous* to God's present natural Government? A. Yes.

Q. Therefore is it not likely to take place? A. Yes.

See Butler's Anal. p. 1. c. 3.

Q. Does

The Christian Catechism. 125

Q. Does God create any Faculty or Power in vain? A. No.

Q. Wou'd not Conscience be in vain, if there was no future Judgment? A. Yes*.

L 3

Q. Is

* Q. What renders Beings capable of moral Government; of Government by Law and Judgment? A. That they have a moral Nature, or Faculties of Perception between Reason and Duty, and of Action.

Q. What is this Faculty called? A. Conscience, moral Reason, or moral Sense.

Q. What doth it include? A. Both the *Sentiments* of the Understanding, and the *Perceptions* of the Heart.

Q. Is not all our Language and Behaviour with Men formed upon a Supposition of such a moral Faculty in Man? A. Yes.

Q. Is not every Man who thinks and reflects at all, conscious of such a Faculty, and of a Power of Choice and Action? A. Yes.

Q. Do we not find in our selves a Capacity of thinking in Actions, Habits, and Characters; on doing which do we not naturally and unavoidably approve some Actions, &c. under the peculiar View of their being virtuous, or of good Desert; and condemn others as vicious, or of ill desert? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not hence apparent, that there is an essential, plain, and important Distinction between Virtue and Vice? A. Yes.

Q. And is it not becoming God, as Governor of the rational and moral World, to distinguish Men at last by their moral Characters, and to reward and punish according to their Behaviour? A. Yes.

Q. Wou'd not this essential Difference between Virtue and Vice, and Men's Capacity of seeing it, and of acting according to it, be otherwise in vain? A. Yes.

No sooner are *Actions* view'd, and human *Passions* discern'd, than an inward *EYE* distinguishes the fair and amiable, from the foul, odious and despicable. These Distinctions

are

Q. Is not Conscience also a Judge which keeps a *Court of Record*, and acts as God's Vicegerent, not only to direct the Actions of Life, but to keep a Register of Mens Actions, and gather in Evidences? A. Yes.

Q. But wou'd there be any need to record Mens Actions, unless in order to produce them again in Judgment? A. No.

Q. Has not Conscience also an essential Relation to a Law and Rule of Action? A. Yes.

Q. And will not the Law or Rule of Mens moral Actions be the Rule of Judgment? A. Yes.

Q. Farther, does not Conscience, as it ap-

therefore are founded in Nature; and the distinguishing Faculty is natural also.

There are two things which to a rational Creature must be horribly offensive and grievous; namely, to have the Reflection in his Mind of any *unjust* Action and Behaviour, which he knows to be naturally *odious* and *ill-deserving*; or; of any *foolish* Action and Behaviour, which he knows to be prejudicial to his own Interest and Happiness. The Former of these is alone properly called *Conscience*, in a moral or religious Sense. The Fear of Hell, or the Terrors of the Deity do not imply Conscience, unless there is an Apprehension of what is *wrong*, *odious*, *deformed*, and *ill-deserving*.

Characterist. Vol. II.

The Voice of Conscience, when it is truly natural Conscience (that is, a right judging, and uncorrupted Conscience) is the *soft*, but *Authoritative* Voice of God.—It is that Principle in Man which Judges of the *Morality* of Actions. It is called the *Heart*, the *Spirit*, the *Law wrote in the Heart*. — It is a natural Principle, for it results from our very Frame, *we feel it* in ourselves, and discern it in others.

Foster, Vol. II.

See Argu, 2d. for the Immortality of the Soul.
proves

proves or disapproves a Man's Actions, excite Hope or Fear of Futurity? A. Yes.

Q. By these Hopes and Fears does God support and encourage good Men, and restrain wicked Men? A. Yes.

Q. But will a just God rule the World by a Lie, or by imaginary Hopes and Fears? A. No.

Q. Will there not then be a future Judgment? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *third* Argument for a future Judgment? A. That a wise, just, holy, and good God will some way or other, or some time or other shew himself *pleased* with those intelligent Beings who strive to imitate and obey him; and *displeased* with those who act contrary to his Nature and Law. That God doth not constantly signify his Favour to the Former, nor his Displeasure against the Latter in this World; therefore he will do it in another. 1 Sam. ii. 30. *They who honour me, I will honour; and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.* Rom. ii. 2,—16. Chap. iii. 5, 6. *Is God unrighteous?—God forbid; for then how shall God judge the World*.*

Q. Do.

* Holiness and Justice require the exactly proportioning, by the moral Governor, Happiness to good Desert, and Misery to ill Desert; This is not done in the present State, where *healthy Constitutions*, external advantageous Circumstances, &c. are often the Portion of bad Men; but *sickly Constitutions*.

Q. Do not all the *moral Perfections* of God carry in them the Idea of an Obligation upon him to judge the World? A. Yes.

Q. For Instance; wou'd it not be highly unbecoming the *Wisdom* of God to make a World of Intelligent Creatures, subject to his Dominion, and under Obligations of Duty to himself, and to each other, and never reckon with them, but suffer them to go on in endless Rebellion? A. Yes.

Q. Does not the *Justice* of God oblige him to treat his Creatures agreeably to their different moral Behaviour; to make the good happy and the vicious miserable, in proportion to their Deserts? A. Yes. Eph. vi. 8.

Constitutions, ill Treatment, &c. the Portion of the good. This prevents this exact Proportion from taking place here; there must therefore be a future State to make room for it, and a future righteous Judgment. For the same Reason that God at all approves and delights in Holiness and Goodness, he must approve and delight most in the highest Degrees of them, and make the Best the most happy; and on the contrary make the most vicious the most miserable. *The Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him, and the Wickedness of the Wicked shall be upon him.* Ezek. xviii. 20.

From God's infinite *Wisdom*, by which he must see what is fittest to be done at all times; and his infinite *Power* in making him with Ease to effect it; and consequently his consummate and immutable *Happiness*, we may certainly infer his *moral Perfections*; nay that he is a Being of absolute and necessary moral Perfection, who can have no Temptation to violate any of the eternal Rules of Righteousness, Truth and Goodness.

iii. 25. *Whatsoever good Things any Man, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be Slave or Freeman (Servant or ter) but he who doth wrong shall receive the wrong which he hath done, for there is no Respect of Persons.*

Q. Does not the Goodness of God oblige to confine or consume the incurably mis-
vicious, that they may not always afflict
Innocent and injure the Good? A. Yes*.

Q. Can then the Reputation of God's go-
ing Wisdom, Righteousness and Good-
be sufficiently vindicated any other way
by punishing the Transgressors of his
laws, and favouring the Observers of them?
No.

Q. If this be not statedly done in this World,
it not be done in another? A. Yes. Prov.
i. 17, 18.—*Surely there is an End, and thy
retribution shall not be cut off.*

Divine Goodness may not be a bare single Disposition to
create Happiness; but a Disposition to make the good,
the faithful Man happy.

Butler's Anal. p. 23.

Reality Goodness is the natural and just Object of the
just Fear to an ill Man. For Malice may be appeased
and changed; Humour may change; but Goodness is a fixed,
immovable Principle of Action. If either of the
Law holds the Sword of Justice, there is plainly Ground
for the greatest Crimes to hope for Impunity; but if it be
benevolent, there can be no possible Hope, while the Reason
forbids, and the Ends of Government call for Punish-

Butler's Serm. Pref.

shall fear the Lord and his Goodness in the latter Days.
iii. 5. Jer. xxxlii. 9.

2. Which

2. Which is the *fourth* Argument for a future Judgment? A. That if there was no future Judgment, these wou'd be the necessary Consequences. 1. The great Tyrants of the World, who have reigned in Villany and Blood, wou'd never be reckoned with and punished. Psal. ii. 2.—*The Kings of the Earth, —and Rulers take Counsel together against Jehovah, and against his Anointed.—He who sitteth in Heavens will —deride,—and vex them.* 2. The inward Wickedness of the Mind and Heart, the ill Conduct of the Spirit, in its invisible Sphere, wou'd escape unpunished. Rom. ii. 16.—*In the Day when God will Judge the Secrets of Men*†. 3.

The

† The Detection and Punishment of *Secret Sins* is thus represented by an ingenious *Gentile* Writer.

Megapenthes, a wicked Gentleman, being, after Death arraigned before one of the infernal Judges; at his Trial “ These Murders and these Rapines, *says he*, I confess.” But as to his *Secret Crimes*, he denied them all, and stood upon his Defence. The Judge commanded his LAMP to be produced as Evidence; The LAMP appeared, and the Judge demanded what it knew of the Prisoner at the Bar; It answered with a Sigh, “ Wou'd I had been conscious of No-
“ thing; for even the Remembrance of his Villanies make
“ me tremble; I wish my Light had been extinguished
“ that the Oil which maintained it, had quenched it; I
“ burnt with Disdain, and sent out some Sparks to fire his
“ impure Bed, and was grieved that my little Flame was
“ so weak as not to consume it; I said within my self,
“ *If the Sun saw this Wickedness, it wou'd be Eclipsed, and*
“ *leave the World in Darkness:* But now I perceive why
“ I was constrained to give Light to him; that being a Je-
“ c

The Christian Catechism. 131

The Servants of God, who have suffered for their Fidelity, wou'd be finally Losers, and more miserable than other Men. 1 Cor. xv. 18, 19. Then they who are fallen asleep in (or for) Christ are perished, &c.

Q. Are not all these Consequences inconsistent with our Ideas of the divine Rectitude, Wisdom and Goodness; and therefore unreasonable and false? **A.** Yes.

Q. Which is the *fifth* Argument for a future Judgment? **A.** It is necessary to clear up Providence, or to vindicate the Wisdom, Justice and Goodness of God in the Administration of the Affairs of the World; many of which are perplexed and seem very unequal.

Q. Have not the *best Men* sometimes the least Share of the Good of this World, and the largest Share of its Evils? **A.** Yes.

" erst Spy of his Uncleanneſs, his Thefts, his Avarice, his Cruelties, his Pride, I might reveal them all."

After the **LAMP** had given its Evidence, the Judge orders the Criminal to lay aside his Robe, and stand naked. Upon a Scrutiny, he finds his Ghost all over spotted, livid, black and blue (every Sin having left a Wound or Stain). Then the Judge decreed his Punishment; " That he shou'd never drink of the River *Lethe*." that is, that he shou'd never lose the sad Remembrance of his past Condition; but be for ever haunted with the Ideas of his past Wealth and Luxury, his Covetousness, Filthiness and Cruelty; and that these Images shou'd be his perpetual Torment.

Lucian's Dial. Cataplus, seu Tyrannus.

This is a lively Representation of the Power of Conscience, which, in the future State, will bring to remembrance all past Sins, and be in the Breasts of Sinners a never-dying Worm, and a Fire unquenchable.

Q. And have not the *worst Men* sometimes the largest Share of the good things of this World; and the least Share of its evil things? A. Yes †.

Q. Is it not highly necessary these Difficulties be cleared up, and that Men be put more upon a Level, by being treated according to their Qualities and Works? A. Yes.

Q. Can this be any other way done, but by a future Judgment? A. No.

Q. Is it not then as certain there will be a future Judgment, as that God is a wise, righteous, and good Governor of the World? A. Yes.

† To illustrate the *Mysteriousness* of God's Providence, the *Jews* have this Tradition; "That *Moses*, during the Time he was in the Mount, conferred with God about his governing Wisdom and Justice; and proposing some Doubt, God order'd him to look down; where he saw a Soldier alighting to drink at a Well; and going off he left a Bag of Money behind him. A Boy comes next to the Fountain, found the Money, and carried it away. Then an Old Man comes; while he was at the Well, the Soldier returns and demands the Bag of Money; the old Man denied that he either had it, or saw it; upon which the Soldier, in a Rage, stabs him dead and rode off. *Moses* stood amazed, that Providence should suffer the innocent old Man to fall a Sacrifice, while the Boy went off safe with the Money." When presently a Voice is heard, telling him, "That the old Man had murdered the Father of the Boy who was gone off with the Money.

See *Spectat.* Vol. III. 294.

See Dr. *More's* divine Dial. Vol. I. p. 321. The Parable of the Angel and the Hermite.

S E C T. II.

Q. **A**S it is revealed, that there will be **ONE GREAT SOLEMN DAY** for the **PUBLICK JUDGMENT** of the **WHOLE WORLD**, is not this probable, or agreeable to the Dictates of Reason? **A.** Yes.

Q. What is the *first* Reason shewing it to be probable? **A.** Because such a Day will be more glorious to all God's Attributes; to his Heart-searching Knowledge, to his governing Wisdom and Righteousness, to his paternal Love and Goodness, and to his almighty Power. *Rom. ii. 5, 12, 16. 2 Thes. i. 8, 10.*

Q. Which is the *second* Reason? **A.** Because such a Day will be more glorious to the Mediator and Judge, the Son of God; when the Perfections with which he is indued, his Knowledge, Justice and Grace will shine forth in judging the World, and in saving Multitudes of Souls: And when the Wisdom, Holiness and Goodness of his Laws, and consequently the Reasonableness of Religion, and the Unreasonableness of Sin, will appear to Angels and Men. *Acts xvii. 31.*

M

Q. Which

Q. Which is the *third* Reason? A. Because such a Day will be more honourable and joyful to the faithful Servants of God; and tend to the greater Shame and Confusion of Sinners. *Rom. ii. 3—9. 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.*

Q. Which is the *fourth* Reason? A. Because the fore-notice of such a Day granted to the Word, is proper to keep in awe its Inhabitants, and to quicken and encourage the Servants of God. *2 Pet. ii. 4.*

CHAP. V.

The Truth and Divine Authority of the Christian Revelation.

SECT. I.

Q. **H**OW many Sorts of Religion are there in the World? A. Principally four *.

Q. Which are they? A. The *Mahometan*, *Jewish*, *Pagan*, and *Christian* Religion.

Q. Why are you not a **MAHOMETAN**; or why do you not believe the *Koran* (the Turkish Bible) to be a Revelation from God?

A. 1. Because the *Koran* is a Heap of absurd Doctrines, sensual and trifling Laws. And

M 2

the

* Q. What is it that constitutes a different Religion? A. A different Rule or Revelation.

Q. What is the Rule of the *Mahometan* Religion? A. The *Koran*. Note, in the Word *Alcoran*, *Al* signifies the; *Koran* signifies *Lecton*; so we may say, the *Christian Koran*.

Q. What is the Rule of the *Jewish* Religion? A. The Revelation from God in the Old Testament, superadded to natural Revelation.

Q. What is the Rule of the *Pagan* Religion? A. The Will of God as revealed in the Works of the Creation and Providence, as far as discovered by human Reason.

Q. What is the Rule of the *Christian* Religion? A. The New Testament, superadded to (the moral Part of the Old Testament, and to) natural Revelation.

Q. Who is the Author of the *Mahometan* or Turkish Religion? A. *Mahomet*.

Q. Who

136 *The Christian Catechism.*

the Religion it requires is an inconsistent Mixture of Paganism, Judaism and Christianity.

2. Because the Author, or Founder of it, was a deceitful, cruel, vicious Man.

3. Because no real, open, uncontestible Miracles were wrought to confirm the Revelation of *Mahomet*, by proving the divine Mission of the Revealer.

4. Because it was propagated by vile Arts and Delusions, by sensual Incouragements, by forbidding Learning and Knowledge, by Arms and Violence.

Q. Can any absurd Doctrines or unrighteous and sensual Laws come from God? **A.** No.

Q. Is it not highly improbable God wou'd employ an immoral Man to plant a new and good Religion in the World? **A.** Yes.

Q. If God send a Messenger, will he not enable him to prove his Mission by sufficient Evidence? **A.** Yes.

Q. Is it consistent with the Wisdom, Holiness and Goodness of God, or with the Na-

Q. Who is the Author of the *Jewish* Religion? **A.** God, by the Ministry of *Moses*.

Q. Who is the Author of the *Pagan* Religion? **A.** As far as it is true, God is the Author of it.

Q. Who is the Author of the *Christian* Religion? **A.** by the Ministry of Jesus Christ,

ture

ture and Happiness of Man, to promote Religion by Fraud, Force, Ignorance or fleshly Indulgences? A. No *.

* Q. When did *Mabometanism*, or the Turkish Religion, arise in the World? A. About the Year 600.

Q. When the Christian Religion, which consists in Purity of Mind, and a new divine Life, degenerated into bodily Exercises, or external Rites, did God then suffer *Mabomet* and the Papal Antichrist to arise? A. Yes.

Q. Whence are the *Mabometans* called *Saracenes*? A. From *Sarack*, *Iurari*, *Excurrere*; because they ran abroad and lived upon Robbery. Or, from *Sarah*, for they pretend to be of her Posterity.

Q. Whence are they called *Hagarenes*? A. From *Hagar*. *Weems's Christ. Synag.* p. 296.

In every Respect *Mabomet* differed in his Methods from **JESUS CHRIST**; and his Religion hath all the Marks of Imposture. For, 1. The Character of the Author is too suspected to support the Honour of a Messenger from God. 2. His disclaiming Miracles and Prophecies is an Acknowledgment of the Vanity and Falshood of his Pretensions; and that he was conscious of his not having a divine Warrant. 3. The few wonderful Things related of him are fabulous and romantick. 4. Forbidding religious Inquiries shews he knew his Religion wou'd not bear them. And he opened his Scene amongst a stupid People, void of Curiosity; for only one Man in *Mecca* was able to read and write. 5. Propagating his Religion by the Sword, is a Proof he was sensible it wou'd never prevail by Argument. 6. Falshoods in Fact shew the Ignorance or Wickedness of the Founder. 7. The Indulgences which *Mabomet's* Religion gives to sensual Inclinations, is an Argument of the Badness of his own; and of his Resolution to sacrifice Chastity and Virtue to Ambition and Power. 8. Many of his Precepts are absurd and ridiculous. 9. The Motives and Rewards set before Men are suited only to Minds oppressed with Sensuality and enslaved to Vice. He accommodates his Religion to the Humours of the *Arabians*, and changed it as their Humours required. See Plain Reasons for being a Christian. p. 49.

Prideaux's Life of Mabomet and Letter to the Deists.

S E C T. II.

Q. WHY are you not a *Jaw*? **A.** Because the *Jewish* Constitution and Polity is utterly dissolved; and their Religion, as peculiar to the *Jews*, abolished.

Q. How was the Revelation made by *Moses* (which is the Law and Rule of the *Jewish* Religion) proved to be Divine? **A.** By a Succession of illustrious and unquestionable Miracles and Prophecies.

Q. Are not the moral Parts of the *Jewish* Religion founded in Nature, and adopted into the Christian Religion? **A.** Yes.

Q. How far then can it be rejected? **A.** Only so far as it is Political, Ceremonious, and proper to that People.

Q. Can the *Jewish* Law, as such, bind Christians? **A.** No, for it was delivered only to them who were brought out of the Land of *Egypt* and the House of Bondage.

Q. Does it make any sufficiently plain and certain Distinction between what is moral and ceremonial, or of partial and universal, of temporary and eternal Obligation? **A.** No.

Q. How then must Christians resolve the binding Authority of the moral Parts of the Old Testament? **A.** Into the Law of Nature, and the Gospel Revelation.

Q. Is it foretold by the *Jewish* sacred Writers, that their Law shou'd cease, their Temple

ple be destroy'd, and the *Jews* dispersed? A. Yes. *Gen.* xlix. 10. *Deut.* xviii. 15. *Psal.* xl. 6. *Isa.* lxvi. 2, 21, 24. *Jer.* iii. 18. chap. xxxi. 31,—34. *Dan.* ix. 26, 27. *Mal.* i. 11.

Q. Do not their own Books also disparage the ceremonial Services? A. Yes. *Pf.* xl 50, 51. *Isa.* i. *Jer.* vii. *Hos.* vi. *Mic.* vi.

Q. Has not Christ also, and his Apostles, declared the ceremonial Law to be ceased? A. Yes. *Mat.* xxv. 11. 2 *Cor.* iii. 13. *Eph.* ii. 15. *Col.* ii. 12. *Heb.* ix. 9.

Q. As the *Jewish* Religion was not intended to be *perpetual*, or to last thro' all Ages; cou'd it not be intended to be *Universal*, or to be the Religion of the whole World? A. No.

Q. Why cou'd it not? A. Because it was confined to the Temple at *Jerusalem*, by the three solemn Feasts; and the Administration of its sacred Offices was confined to one particular Tribe and Family.

Q. Moreover, is not God's Covenant with *Abraham* and the *Jewish* Nation founded on the Expectation of the Messiah; and are not the Promises of a Saviour interwoven with all the Parts of the antient Revelation? A. Yes.*

Q. And

* The Covenant God made with the *Jewish* Nation being *National*, only a *national* or a *temporal* Happiness could be promised in it. And this was an Occasion of the *additions* *Detail* of future Rewards and Punishments.

Q. And by all possible Computations of the Time of this Saviour's coming, must not that Time be now elapsed and past? A. Yes •.

Certainly either the *Jewish Covenant* is quite abolished, or they lie under some notorious Guilt for many Ages; and can they tell us what this is, except *contemning and crucifying the Messiah*. B. 5. S. 17.

As nothing can be alledged by the *Jews* in behalf of *Moses*, but, by at least equal right, may be applied by the Christians in behalf of Jesus Christ. So to object, that Christ's coming is deferred because of the Sins of the People, is as absurd as to say, a Physician's coming is deferred, because of that Disease he is appointed to cure, B. 5. S. 15.

There are *three* Things remarkable as to the *Jews*, their *Number*, *Dispersion*, *Adherence to their Religion*. The *natural Reason* of the First may be, their constant Employment, Abstinence, Exemption from War, and frequent Marriages. The *natural Reason* of the Second may be their Rebellions and Tumults. The *natural Reason* of the Third may be, the Strength of their political Constitution; for they live all in a Body, and generally within the same Inclosure; they Marry amongst themselves, eat no Meats which are not killed and prepared their own Way. This shuts them out of all Table-Conversation, and the most agreeable Intercourses of Life; and, by consequence, excludes them from the most probable Means of Conversion.

The *Providential Reason* of these three Particulars may be, that they have furnished every Age and every Nation of the World with the strongest Arguments for the Christian Faith. Not only as these particulars are foretold of them; but as they themselves are the Depositories of these and other Prophecies, which tend to their own Confusion. Their *Number* furnishes us with a sufficient Cloud of Witnesses who attest the Truth of the old Bible. Their *Dispersion* spreads these Witnesses thro' all Parts of the World, Their *Adherence to their Religion* makes their Testimony Unquestionable.

Speciat. Vol. 7. No. 495.

* That the Time of the Messiah's coming fixed by *Isaiah*, during the Continuance of the *Jewish Polity*; and by
Haggai

Q. Therefore, if Christ be not come, must not the *Jewish* Prophecies be false or a Delusion? A. Yes.

Q. If Christ be come, must not the Christian Religion be true? A. Yes.

Q. If it be true, ought not all Men to embrace it? A. Yes.

S E C T. III.

The Necessity and Usefulness of a Revelation.

Q. **W**H Y are you not a PAGAN, Heathen or Deist? Or, why do you not worship God according to the Light of Nature, and the Dictates of Reason only? A. Because by the help of my Bible, which I judge a Revelation from God, I find my

Haggai during the standing of the second Temple, is expired.

See *Allix*. Reflect. V. 2. p. 84. &c. *Tillotson's* Posth. Serm. V. 2. Ser. 1. *Sherlock's* Diss. on Jacob's Prophe.

And for the Expiration of *Daniel's* Weeks, upon the latest Computation; See *Prideaux's* Connect. Part. I. B. V. *Candler's* Vindic. of *Daniel*.

The *Jewish Talmud*, tho' greatly revered by them, is full of Absurdities and Blasphemies: for Instance, it says, "God spends three Hours a Day in Studying the Law; three more in teaching Children, who died in Minority; three more in taking Account of the World; and in the three last diverts himself with *Leviathan*. And that the Night being come, (for they imagine the Sun sets in Paradise) he ascends a Chariot drawn by the swiftest Spirits, the Cherubim, to visit the 18000 Worlds, which they think he has created.

Reason

Reason greatly assisted in my Inquiries after Truth and Duty ; and clearly directed in my Worship ; and my Mind raised to the greatest Hopes by the Motives there propounded. I find also its Claim to a divine Character supported by its *Contents*, which are every way worthy of God ; and by proper *external Evidence*. And I ought not to despise or neglect so great a Help.

Q. Tho' we ought not to neglect any real Help to Religion and Happiness ; yet does not a Revelation from God seem needless, where he has given Men Reason ? **A.** No, for as I cannot conceive how the first Man * cou'd know many useful and necessary Points, as his own Original, and that of his Wife, what worship wou'd be acceptable to the Deity, what Food to eat, &c. without the Aids of Revelation †. So where Revelations from God have not been made, or where the Memory of them and their Influence have been lost, Men have invented the most wretched Schemes of Religion, and gone into Notions most absurd, and into Practises abominable. And by all Accounts, antient and modern, we find that in those Regions of the Earth, where there is no Bible Revelation, gross Ig-

* It is supposed there was a *first Man*. No tolerable Account was ever given of the Original of Men, but the Scripture one.

† See *Allix. Reflect.* Vol. I. Chap. 8, and 9.

norance, Idolatry and Immorality prevail *.

Q. What Purposes does Revelation serve, which may not be answered by the Force of Reason, where Men *use it right*? A. All Nations and all Men, when they have departed from Revelation and Original Tradition, have in fact *used their Reason wrong*, as to Matters of Religion. Revelation not only tends to awake the reasoning Powers; but, in a short and direct way, leads Men into *right Notions*, and to a *right Practise*; it sets the *Truths* of Religion in a clear Light; gives plain *Rules* of Duty; and propounds strong *Motives* to Virtue.

Q. But have not some of the *Gentiles*, such as *Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Epictetus, Seneca*, by the Force of Reason, delivered noble Truths and excellent Rules to Mankind? A. Yes. And they might have some Aid from traditional Revelation, or by conversing with Men who had God's Oracles. Yet there were but one or two such Men in an Age or Nation; and even these eminent Men were not converted from their Idolatries; they had imperfect Notions of Religion, were in doubt about a future State; and made few, if any Converts to real Piety and Virtue †.

Besides,

* See *Shuckford's Connect.* Vol. I. p. 328, 363, &c. Vol II. p. 316, 345. Vol. III. p. 146, &c.

† *The Gentiles*, when Christ came did and still do worship *Creatures, Images, Demons*; and they worship the *true*

Besides, we find the Bulk of Mankind, at this Day, where the Light of Scripture does not Shine, are real Strangers to the *Truths* of Religion, Enemies to the *Practise* of it, and know not the proper *Motives* to support it.

But suppose Men were able, by the Force of close reasoning, to find out the Being, Unity and Perfections of God, the Duties owing to him and each other, the Nature of the Soul and a future State: yet, considering Mens general *Inability* for close and abstract Reasoning, and their *Aversion* to it, the *Prejudices* on the side of Sense, the Strength of the animal *Passions* and *Appetites*, the many *Avocations* they meet with, the necessary *Cares* and *Business* about the Body they are engaged in; very few, if any, wou'd ever form a just Scheme of Religion. We find few able to do it, with the Help of a Bible and of Education; what then can be expected from the People in *Africa* and *America*, who have no such Help!

true God under unworthy Representations and Emblems, even Stocks and Stones. They were curious about Trifles, but careless of Holiness and inward Virtue. Their Religion was a Mixture of *Folly* and *Filthiness*; witness their *Auguries*, *Floralia*, &c. And even such a Writer as the moral *Philosopher* acknowledges the Usefulness of Revelation in the present corrupt State of Mankind.

Vol. I. p. 143, 144, 145.

The Heathens, by consulting their *Oracles*, shewed they did believe God had revealed his Will to Men, and that they hoped and expected he wou'd farther do it.

Farther,

Farther, were Men *every where*, and in their *present State*, able to find out the One true God, their Duty to him, and to each other, and the strong Motives to a religious Life; yet it must be owned to be of vast Service to have ready drawn up a Summary of Religion, a History of Providence, Rules of Life, and Motives to Virtue, in a short Compass, in a plain Stile and in a striking Manner: And All coming with the Force of divine Authority, as the Voice of God, and as a Ray from Heaven.

Q. But does not God sufficiently appear, and manifest his Will to Men, in all his Works? Does he not appear to be a good, gracious and merciful Being; and does not his constant Goodness call Men to Repentance, and to Gratitude, and give them Hope of his accepting them? A. We find that in fact the Heathen World, with all their Wisdom, *knew not God*; and the Few, who, in some Degree, knew him, *glorified him not as God*. And tho' we, by the Help of Scripture Light, see God shining in his Grace and Goodness; yet God only can tell upon what Terms Sinners shall be pardoned; or whether Repentance and future Obedience will be full Atonement for past Offences. Without Revelation, a sinful World wou'd be much in the Dark, and greatly at a loss in these important and essential Points.

Q. But is it reconcileable with our Ideas of the Holiness and Goodness of God, to cast off a Creature who repents, turns to him, loves and serves him? A. Tho' the Consideration of the Nature of God may give all Men some Incouragement to turn to him, and some Hope of Acceptance; according to God's Appeal to *Cain*. Gen. iv. 7. Yet Repentance is, in a great measure, a *supernatural Remedy*; and clear Views of Pardon is a *supernatural Motive*. The Scriptures are a loud Call from God to Repentance, and the most powerful Means to effect it. This Book alone giveth Men Assurance of full Forgiveness; and yet at the same time telleth us, that something more than Repentance is necessary, as the Condition of a pardoning Covenant, in order to secure the Ends of divine Government; even a *Sacrifice of Atonement*: And that something more is necessary to qualify Men for Happiness, than Repentance of past Sin, even the Seeds and Habits of Piety and Virtue. Moreover, if any, by the Light of Nature, are brought to true Repentance, to know and love God; how few are they, and in how imperfect a Degree are they converted, in comparison with the Conversions the Gospel has effected!

Q. If Men *have not Faculties* sufficient to discover God and their Duty, and to direct them to Religion and Virtue, are they not *excusable* in their Ignorance and Wickedness?

A. S

A. So far as Men's Faculties are naturally and absolutely insufficient, so far they are excusable; for God requires no Impossibilities; nor any Service, but in Proportion to the Abilities he gives. Men who have no Revelation may be excusable for not arriving at such a Degree of *Knowledge* and *Virtue*, as those who enjoy the Gospel are called and obliged to; and therefore they must necessarily fall short of that Degree of *Happiness* which Christian Knowledge and Virtue only can prepare Men for, and intitle them to. Immoral Heathens may also escape such a *Condemnation* as wicked Christians will be liable to, who have sinned against more Light and stronger Motives.

But they are not excusable in any Degrees of wilfull Ignorance, in the Misimprovement of their Abilities and Advantages; or in Sins, the moral Evil of which they might see by a proper Use of the Reason they have. And if they used well the Faculties God has intued them with, they wou'd be accepted according to the Degree of their Goodness, as *Cornelius* was, *Acts* x. 1—4. and wou'd be qualified for more Light.

Q. But why is God so *partial* with his Creatures, all his own Off-spring, equally related to himself, and none more deserving than others, as to grant some so high Privileges and valuable Helps, which he denies to others? Why are some render'd capable

148 *The Christian Catechism.*

of so great a Happiness as the Gospel proposeth; while others of the human Race seem capable of little higher Perfection than the Brutes, yet are equally the Descendants of *Adam* and *Noah*?

A. God, as *Rector* and *Judge*, will treat all Men according to their Talents and their Improvement of them; and place them in Abodes, in the future State, suited to their Capacities and Conduct here. But God, as *Proprietor* and *Benefactor*, may distribute his free Gifts as his Wisdom directs. And these Inequalities, visible in the whole Course of God's Providence, as well as in the Dispensation of the Gospel Light, is a Difficulty which the Deists are as much obliged to answer as the Christians are; for the Light of Nature is very unequally dispensed as well as the Light of Scripture.

Farther, may we not as well ask, why is one Man in the Distresses of Poverty, while his Neighbour, of less Merit, walloweth in Wealth? why is one Man a Slave, while a worse Man lords it over him? why Beasts of Burden are made, as well as Birds of Pleasure, and Beasts of Liberty? These Varieties beautify Providence; but the particular Reasons of these Determinate Lots must be left to the other World and the great Day. However we may say, that since the Gospel is a Blessing in its Nature design'd for the whole World; and that Christ gave his Apostles a
Com-

Commission to preach it every where, and to every Creature; it may be owing to Negligence and a worldly Spirit in their Successors, as also in Princes and Merchants, that it is not carried thro' the World. And God is not to be charged with the Faults of Men.

Besides, God may cause the Gospel of his Son to spread as fast as the Nations of the World are prepared to receive it, and willing to accept it.

Q. But in Case all Men will be judged by the *Law they are under*, and according to the Light they enjoy; may not Men do well enough without the Gospel? was there any Necessity of the Christian, or any other Revelation? Is not this a mere waste of Power and Grace? A. If the Scriptures are visibly a Blessing to the World, and put Men into a Capacity for greater Perfection and Happiness; All, to whom this Revelation is sent, ought to accept it with Thankfulness, without curious Inquiries about the *Necessity* of it; or why they, and not others, have such Helps afforded them.

With regard to this Life, do any quarrell with God because he grants them *more than bare Necessaries*, even Conveniences and Abundance; tho' he expects a suitable Improvement of them? With what face then can they quarrel with him and spurn his Bounty in regard to their Souls, if he give them more than

than is absolutely necessary! This is stupidly ingrateful and insolent*.

Besides, if God be the Author of the Gospel (as will be proved hereafter) it must be a Dispensation of Wisdom, and a fit Remedy for Mankind.

More

* Tho' an *Indian* may have as much Light as is sufficient to direct him in his immediate Duty; since it cannot be any Man's Duty to *do*, what it is not in his Power to *know*. Yet the better Men understand their Duty, the more *virtuous* they may be; the more virtuous, the nearer do they arrive to *Perfection*; the nearer to *Perfection* they are, the larger is their Sphere and Prospect of *Happiness*. The Conduct of an *Indian* and *Barbarian* may be approved; and will be so, if he act according to his Light; is he therefore in as good a Condition as *Antoninus* or *Socrates*, a *Moses* or *Samuel*, as *St. Paul* or *St. John*? *Acceptance* is one thing, *Perfection* another.

The *Law of Nature* is not only sufficient, but perfect, considered objectively; being a Rule to all intelligent Beings. The *Light of Nature* is that Share of moral Truth which Men discern, or are naturally capable of discerning. This natural Light, tho' little, is in some Sense *sufficient*, namely, to render Men accepted, so far as it is improved: But *insufficient* to bring Mankind to that *Standard of Duty* which belongs to their Nature, and to that State of *Perfection*, of which they are capable; it is insufficient to give them such worthy Notions of God, and such Certainty about a future State as Revelation gives. These Doctrines we may think Demonstrable by Reason; but it is by Reason exercised, improved, enlightened by Revelation.

See *Balcan's* 2d Let. to the Deists.

Suppose Reason sufficient, yet Revelation is not superfluous, because 1. Laying before Men in one View a regular System of religious Truths and Precepts, must very much assist Men in their Discoveries. It being the noblest Instruction. 2. The Authority by which such Revela

Moreover, suppose (as the State of the World makes probable enough, and as the Scriptures assert) some **EVIL BEING** has gained a great Ascendancy over Mankind; it may be necessary, in order to stop the Progress of Vice and Ruin, occasioned by him, to set up a Head of Wisdom, Power and Love, such as Christ is, to oppose him.

Q. But

Revelation is made will ingage Attention. Things not knowable without Teaching, may yet immediately approve themselves to the Mind, when taught. For it is not the mere Power of Reason, but the Exercise of this Power, which discovers Truth.

Connybere's Def.

A Rule may be *absolutely* good and perfect, as the Law of Nature is; but *relatively* deficient, thro' the Imperfection and Weakness of Men.

Balguy.

Can it be reconciled to the Goodness of God, that he shou'd never send any Messenger (Myriads of which you will allow me to suppose) to inform Mankind about that blessed World, their own Existence, their God, their Happiness, the Way to it; or never irradiate the Mind of one Man?

I. Must we resolve, that the great God cannot, will not, shall not reveal to us any thing which was done before we were made on the Earth? In the Records of the old *Hebrew* Historian *Moses*, several Phænomena or strange Appearances are resolved and accounted for, which wou'd have remained Difficulties without Revelation. For Instance,

1. The Rise and Structure of this visible World.
2. The Origination of Mankind.
3. The Distinction of the Sex and Species.
4. The Institution of Marriage.
5. The Distribution of Time into Weeks, or Systems of seven Days.

6. The Origin of Physical Evil.

7. The Entrance of Sin, or Beginning of moral Evil.

8. Th

Q. But if God has made all Men for Happiness (and what other Motive, but to communicate Happiness, cou'd influence God, self-sufficient Being to create Man) is it a Contradiction to his Design, to suppose Men created for an *End*, when they are denied the *Means* necessary to obtain that *End*?

A. Men are indeed made for Happiness

8. The Rise of Shame to naked Persons.
9. The Original of Garments and Cloathing to cover Shame.
10. The Pains of Conception and Childbirth.
11. The Entrance of Death.
12. The Way of disposing of the Dead, by Interment.
13. The present Face of our Earth, and the Constitution of our Dry-Land, caused by a Deluge.
14. The most authentick Warrant for eating Flesh.
15. The authentick Order for judicial Process in Inquisition for human Blood.
16. Repeopling the desolated Earth.
17. The Origin of Languages.
18. The strange Bituminous Lake, the *dead Sea*.
19. The Founder of the first City, and the Occasion of
20. The Rise of the first great Monarchy.
21. The Original of Circumcision.
22. The Origin of the *Hebrew Nation*.

II. Must no Notice be given of *Futureties*; such as depend on the free Disposals of God, or the voluntary Agents of Man? For Instance,

1. Must no Notice be given of the Flood?
2. — Or, of the Rise of great Monarchies?
3. — Of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, that God's Servants might escape?
4. — Of the Rise of great Persecutions, that they might be preserved?

but in a way suitable to intelligent and free Agents; who by a Neglect of their Understandings, or an ill Use of Reason, may render themselves incapable and unworthy of it. By a neglect of Education, they may also occasion Posterity to grow up in great Ignorance, and gradually to degenerate into brutish Tempers and Manners: And God is not obliged to repeat extraordinary Aids as oft as Men abuse and forfeit them.

Q. Is there not a great Prevalency of Ignorance and Vice amongst Christians, espe-

5. — Of the Prosperous State of God's Kingdom?
6. — Of the Resurrection of dead Friends?
7. — Of the last Destruction of the World by Fire?

III. Of the many things existing *at present*, but beyond human Reach, the Knowledge of which would be delightful and advantageous, must we have no Knowledge, for fear of acknowledging a supernatural Revelation? For Instance,

1. Possibly Forgiveness may be designed for this sinful World.

2. We need Instruction about the Mode and Method of Forgiveness, and the Continuance of a pardon'd State.

3. The State of departed Spirits is a useful Knowledge. Their Felicity; or the Misery of those who Suffer. Moreover, God may be kinder to us than the Hypothesis of the Deists will allow,

1. He may be willing to make us wiser than we could be without supernatural Aids.
2. He may love us beyond our Conceptions.
3. He may be willing to ease us in our Search after Truth.
4. — And to decide some of our Disputes below.
5. — And to give us Assurance as to some important Affairs.

*Reynolds's Letter to the Deists.
cially*

cially in the Church of *Rome*, notwithstanding the Sufficiency of the Gospel Revelation? Now if this State of things is no good Argument against the *Sufficiency of Revelation*; why is the Prevalency of Ignorance and Vice in the heathen World urged as an Argument against the *Sufficiency of Reason* as a Guide to Religion and Happiness? A. The best Helps may be neglected, and the clearest Light counteracted: but we see in fact, an Excellency and Fitness in the Gospel; and where it has Freedom, we see it has produced great Effects, and does produce Light and Virtue in Multitudes of Souls. We see also Reason in a very low State in the heathen World; their Ignorance is almost total, and their Viciousness in a manner Universal; so that few, if any, by the Exercise of Reason only, become religiously wise, virtuous, and qualified for Blessedness. Nor is it any wonder if Ignorance and Wickedness prevail in the Kingdom of Antichrist, where the Truths of God and Christ are almost lost in a Croud of Errors.

Q. But can Man be said to be under *any Law*, as a Rule of Duty, if that Law be not intelligible, clear, plain and easy; and the Sanctions of it sufficiently powerful? And if Men are not under such a Law, how can they be Transgressors of it? And where there is no Transgression, can there be any just Punishment? A. God's Nature, Dominion and

Will are, in part, discoverable by his Works; yet as Men may shut their Eyes, and lose their Way, while the Sun shines; so Men may grow ignorant and mentally blind by Inattention and Carelessness, and not see what wou'd otherwise be plain and easy: And then they may, and will of Course, bring up Posterity in equal Blindness; and at length it may come to pass (as it actually is) that whole Nations may be left in unconceivable Darkness and Barbarity. Yet doubtless God, who winked at the Nations of the World during their long State of Ignorance, will, in Judgment make proper Allowances for all Infelicities any of his Creatures are necessarily subject to.

Q. But is it reconcileable to God's Goodness, that so few shall be saved, or have Means powerfully to effect it, while such Multitudes are left to perish? A. None are left without all Help; nor shall any perish, but for their own willful Sins: And before the End of Time God's House may be full, and his Table furnished with Guests. Possibly also the Execution of the Sinners of this World may be an everlasting Warning to the Inhabitants of other Worlds (as the Imprisonment of the fallen Angels is to us) and a Means of their persevering in their Integrity and Obedience, and so be for the general good of the Universe.

However, God, who considers the Advantages and Disadvantages of all, will make a happy, who are any way fit to be made so by infinite Wisdom and Goodness; and the same good and honest Disposition in Heathens, which would have determin'd them to improve the Advantages of Christianity, had they been granted, shall, thro' CHRIST, be rewarded with a Happiness of the same Kind as the Christians, tho' not in equal Degree because they have not improved equal Talents. *Rom. ii. 12,—16. Mat. xxv. 15^e—21.*

Q. In regard then it is supposed, that Men even in their present State, as created by God and as descended from degenerate Parents have a *natural Capacity* of finding out God and their principal Duties, and thereby of attaining to some Degree of Happiness; what are the CHIEF BARS, which hinder Men from using right this natural Faculty, and rendering their Reason immediately and practically sufficient for these Ends? **A.** The chief Bar to the right use of Reason are these,

1. Carelessness, Inconsideration, and want of Attention. So that the Generality of uninstructed Men have very low Notions of God, very small Sense of Duty, and very obscure Expectations of a future State.

2. Early Prejudices, vain and foolish Notions, contracted thro' a careless and evil Education. For ignorant and foolish Parents naturally

naturally lead their Children into their own absurd Opinions.

3. Sensual Appetites and Passions and worldly Business. It being difficult for Reason to exert its Force on the side of Duty, in the midst of the Pleasures and Business of the World, which take up the Thoughts and Time of most Men.

4. Especially vicious Habits and Practices. Most of the World being Superstitious in their Opinions, vicious in their Dispositions, and wicked in their Practices. *Rom. i. 19, &c.*

Q. Are all these, in the heathen World, strong Hindrances to Men from seeing clearly the Nature of God and of Duty, and from attending duly to a future State of Rewards and Punishments? A. Yes.

Q. Had not the World then great need to be instructed in Matters of Religion by an authorized Messenger? A. Yes.

* Besides imperfect Capacities, Men have strong Passions, to combat, bad constitutional Tendencies, or such as arise from Education and Custom, to resist: Add to these outward Temptation, Example, Sollicitations, Interest, Pleasure, Power; such Byasses require powerful Motives on the other Side, which Revelation furnisheth. Revelation hath also this Advantage, that by settling this one Point, a divine Authority, every thing else is settled of Course.

Revealed Religion differs from *natural* in *Extent*, as to Principles and Precepts; in *Clearness* and Certainty; and in *Efficacy*, by the Force of its Sanctions.

Conybere's Def. p. 226, 345, 376:

Yet how useful soever Revelation is, it was proper the Invention of Letters shou'd go before one designed for standing Use.

S E C T. IV.

The Necessity of Christ's coming.

Q. **W**H Y are you a CHRISTIAN? A. Because I am perswaded that JESUS CHRIST was sent by GOD to teach Men divine Truth, to call them to Holiness, and conduct them to Happiness. *See Sect. I.*

Q. As we have seen the great need and Usefulness of a Revelation from God in General; so is not the great *Necessity* of such a Messenger as JESUS CHRIST very apparent, if Religion must be kept up in the World, and the present and eternal Happiness of Men procured? Yes.

Q. What useful and necessary Ends did the Coming of Christ, and Preaching his Gospel serve? A. Principally Six.

Q. Which was the *first* great End of Christ's Coming? A. To lead Men into the Knowledge of the one only true God, as the Foundation of all Religion; which Knowledge was greatly obscured and almost lost. *John xvii. 1—3*.*

Q. Were Men so sunk in Lust, asleep in a careless Inadvertency, and so full of fearful

* It does not appear from History, that Religion was at first reasoned out.

Butler's Anal. p. 163
Shuckford's Connex

App

Apprehensions, as gave their Priests an Opportunity of instilling into their Heads false Notions of a Deity; and corrupting their Worship with foolish Rites and Ceremonies? A. Yes.

Q. Tho' the wary pagan Priests owned a God Supreme; yet did those crafty Guardians of human Creeds and other Inventions, conceal him from vulgar Knowledge? A. Yes.

Q. And tho' the *Jews* had the Knowledge of one GOD; were they in some measure shut up in a narrow Region of the World? A. Yes.

Q. Was there not then great need of such a Prophet as *Jesus Christ*, to deliver the well-attested Doctrine of *one God* to the World? A. Yes.

Q. Which was the *second* End of Christ's Coming? A. To give Mankind a plain, concise, compleat, well-attested Rule, by which to govern their Spirits, Passions, Lives. *Mat. v. vi.*

Q. Were the *Moral Philosophers*, or Teachers of Morality amongst the *Gentiles* in the Dark, as to some great Points? A. Yes.

Q. What they did deliver, were they able to confirm by Miracle? A. No.

Q. Is not the Voice of an *Apostle*, coming in the Name of God, more likely to be heard than the Voice of a Philosopher? A. Yes.

Q. And wou'd not he who cou'd command the Winds and Seas, Devils and the Dead, be more attended to and sooner credited, than they who cou'd command only Words? A. Yes.

Q. Was not then the Method Christ took better fitted to the Bulk of Mankind, more level to the lowest Capacities, (as it was also well adapted to enlighten and satisfy the highest) than that of dry Reasoning? A. Yes.

Q. Which was the *third* End of Christ's Coming? A. To lay before Men, in a strong Light, the powerful Motives to Holiness, drawn from the Being and Providence of God, and a future State; as well as new Motives, drawn from the Redemption of the World, the Dominion of the Redeemer, his raising the Dead, and his judging the World. *Luke xii. 4—48. Mat. xxv. John iii. 16.*

Q. Are few Men attentive enough to see the internal and essential *Reasonableness* and *Excellency* of Religion and Virtue? A. Yes.

Q. Was there not need then to ingage Mens Passions on the Side of Religion, and awake their Hopes and Fears by the Doctrine of Heaven and Hell represented in the most lively Manner? A. Yes*.

Q. Was

* That the most perfect Scheme of Natural Religion does not supersede, but demonstrate the Benefit of a divine Revelation.

Q. Was there not great Ignorance of, or great Unconcernedness about a future State, when Christ came? A. Yes.

Q. But as Seed, when quickned, cleaves its way thro' the Clods, so does the Soul aspire towards the eternal World, when clearly revealed? A. Yes.

Q. Which was the *fourth* End of Christ's Coming? A. To instruct the World how to worship God in an acceptable Manner. *John iv. 24. chap. xv. 6.*

velation, See Dr. Middleton's Note in the Life of *Cicero*, Vol. III. p. 357. Where he says, That from this general View of *CICERO's Religion*, one cannot help observing, that the most exalted State of human Reason is so far from superseding the Use, that it demonstrates the Benefit of a more *explicit Revelation*: For tho' the *natural Law*, in the Perfection to which it was carried by *Cicero*, might serve for a sufficient Guide to the few, such as himself, of enlarged Minds and happy Dispositions; yet it had been so long depraved and adulterated by the prevailing Errors and Vices of Mankind, that it was not discoverable to those few, without great Pains and Study; and cou'd not produce in them at last any thing more than a Hope, never a full Persuasion: Whilst the greatest Part of Mankind, even of the virtuous and inquisitive, lived *without the Knowledge of God, or the Expectation of a Futurity*; and the Multitude, in every Country, were left to the gross Idolatry of the popular Worship. When we reflect on all this, we must needs see abundant Reason to be thankful to God for the *divine Light of his Gospel*, which *has at last revealed to Babes, what was hidden from the wise*; and without the Pains of searching, or Danger of mistaking, has given us not only the Hope, but the Assurance of Happiness; and made us not only the *Believers*, but the *Heirs of Immortality*.

Q. What made up the Substance of the pagan Worship? **A.** Stately Temples, costly Ornaments, strange and peculiar Habits, Offering of Beasts and Men, worshipping Creatures with a vast Number of Charms and idle Ceremonies.

Q. Must not Purity of Heart, a benevolent Mind, and Integrity of Life be overlooked, while Men are so much devoted to Pomp, Show and bodily Service? **A.** Yes.

Q. Moreover, did the holy Tribe of pagan Priests impose on the Understandings of Men, by persuading them God was to be appeased by their Sacrifices? **A.** Yes *.

Q. Was

* *Superstition*, tho' it looks upon God as an angry Deity; yet counts him easily pleased with flattering Worship. As false Opinions of the Deity beget timorous and dreadful Approaches to him; so just Notions of God produce in Man a Nobleness and Freedom of Soul.

Smith's Disc. of Superstit.

The Priests made it not their Business to teach Men Virtue; if they were diligent in their Observations and Ceremonies, punctual in their Feasts and Solemnities, and the Tricks of Religion; the holy Tribe assured them the Gods were pleased, and they need look no farther. Few went to the Schools of the Philosophers to be instructed in their Duty, and to know what was Good and Evil in their Actions; the Priests sold the better Pennyworths, and therefore had all the Custom: For Lustrations and Sacrifices were much easier than a clean Conscience, and a steady Course of Virtue; and an expiatory Sacrifice, which atoned for the Want of it, much more convenient than a strict and holy Life.

Lock's Reas. of Christian.

Warburton, in the divine Legation of Moses: has endeavoured to show, that the pagan Mytheries and Ceremonies

Q. Was there not great need of Christ, and his Gospel, to cure Men of this Superstition, and to call them off from these Vanities, to the rational Service of the true God? A. Yes.

Q. Which was the *fifth* End of Christ's Coming? A. To assure Men of merciful Assistance in their Opposition to Satan, the Flesh, and the World.

Q. Can the virtuous Principle in Man have greater Encouragement to oppose the Principle of Vice, than that God will be with it? A. No. 1 *John* iv. 4. *Luke* xi. 9.

Q. Since the Arm of the Spirit is mighty, and his Assistance ready, may not every upright Man hope to be victorious in this great War? A. Yes.

Q. But shou'd we have had clear Assurances of this Assistance, had it not been given by Jesus Christ? A. No.

were pure in their Original, instituted by Princes to instruct the People in the Knowledge of God and Providence and a future State; but were in time corrupted by the Priests, and applied to unworthy Purposes. Vol. 1. B. 2. S. 4.

If any Religion ought to be kept up in the World amongst rational Creatures, the *Best*, the most rational and Useful ought to be admitted; If there be any better than the Christian, as to Truths, Precepts, Motives, Method of Propagation, let it be produced. *Grot. L. 1. S. 10.*

The Christian Religion cannot be the Contrivance of Politicians, since by its Principles Men are taught to deny their Fear and Obedience to the mightiest Monarchs, who disown and oppose God. *Newentit. Relig. Phil. V. 2. p. 586.*

Q. Which

concileableness of God to the truly Penitent.
*Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. Heb. ii. 10. Mat. xx
Eph. i. 7. 1 Pet. i. 18,—20. Heb. ix. 14.*

Q. Is not Christ's dying on the Cross
Obedience to the Father, a noble Instance of
Virtue and rational Submission to the
Will? A. Yes. *Luke xxi. 42.*

Q. Does it not shew the World that
nothing is more acceptable to God than
Obedience? A. Yes. *Heb. v. 8, 9. He 1*
(or taught) *Obedience by the Things he su*

Q. And consequently, that nothing is
displeasing to God than Sin and Disobedi-
ence? A. Yes.

Q. Shou'd not God's insisting on this
difficult and expensive Instance of Obedience
of his Son as a Condition of investing him
with a Power to remit Sin. to raise the Dead

Case to be desperate and remediless? A. Yes.

Q. Had the *Gentiles* practised all Sorts of Sacrifices as Means to avert God's Displeasure? A. Yes.

Q. Had the *Jews* a Variety of God's own appointing or approving? A. Yes.

Q. Was it not proper Jesus Christ shou'd be represented as a Sacrifice for Sin, both in Correspondency to the Ideas of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and in order every where to put an End to all Brutal Sacrifices? A. Yes. *Heb. ix. 6. Now once in the End of the World (of the Jewish Ages) he shou'd appear'd to put away Sin (Sacrifices for Sin) by the Sacrifice of himself.*

Q. From all these foregoing Considerations does it not appear highly necessary, in order to preserve Religion and promote Mens Happiness, that such an authorized Messenger as JESUS CHRIST shou'd appear, to stir up Mens Attention; to deliver them from wrong Conceptions of God; to give them clear Rules of Duty; to set Eternity in their View, and to offer them Helps and Motives for the due Government of their Senses, Appetites and Passions? A. Yes.

S E C T. V.

The Necessity and Usefulness of Teachers of Religion, in Subordination to JESUS CHRIST.

Q. **I**S not a standing Order of Teachers very requisite more effectually to secure the Ends of Religion and Happiness?

A. Yes; for Men need Instruction in Religion and the way to eternal Happiness, as well as in the lower Arts relating solely to this Life.

Q. But were not the Teaching of the wise and virtuous Men amongst the Heathens, called Philosophers, sufficient to reform the world, without such an extraordinary Messenger as Jesus Christ? A. They had, in fact, not any considerable, much less universal Success; nor were they ever likely to obtain it, if we consider how many and great were their Defects.

Q. What was their first Defect? A. That they were very few who, in earnest, set themselves to this excellent work*.

* In the Eastern Nations, Job and Others. Amongst the Greeks, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, &c. Amongst the Romans, Cicero, Seneca, &c. Amongst the Persians, Zoroaster. Amongst the Indians, Confucius.

Since true moral Philosophy is a Preparation for the Reception of the Gospel; the Revival of Learning against the Coming of Christ, was an Instance of divine Wisdom and Goodness.

Rapin's Crit. W. V. I. p. 426. 508.

Q. What

Q. What was a *second* Defect? **A.** That they were much *in the dark* as to the Manner in which God would be acceptably worshipped: and how far Repentance wou'd be accepted. They were also uncertain about the Soul's Immortality, and a future State. All which are Doctrines very necessary to a universal Reformation.

Q. What was a *third* Defect? **A.** They were unable *clearly to explain*, to the meanest Capacity, the Things they did teach: for they discoursed of them chiefly in a dry, speculative Way; and had no moral System in which they all agreed.

Q. What was a *fourth* Defect? **A.** They had *no sufficient Authority* by which to ingage Attention, obtain Credit, and inforce the Practise of what they taught: No Miracles, no inspired Tongues, nor Courage to lose all and suffer Death in the Cause of Truth.

Q. Had any one, or any Number, attempted to root out Idolatry and reform a vicious world, without any of this extraordinary and divine Furniture, wou'd not their Attempt have been very fruitless? **A.** Yes.

Q. Is it not then apparent, there wanted a Revelation from God, and an authorized Preacher of it, to recover Mankind out of their degenerate Condition? **A.** Yes.

Q. Is it not agreeable to the Goodness of God, as the Father of Spirits, to make such a Revelation, and send such a Preacher? **A.** Yes.

168 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. Is not a standing Order of Subordinating Teachers, very necessary to render this Revelation universally and continually Useful?
A. Yes.

Q. Is there any but the CHRISTIAN REVELATION (inclusive of the Jewish) which has any just Pretence to be esteemed a Revelation from God? A. No.

S E C T. VI.

Internal MARKS of a Religion coming from God, found in the Christian Revelation.

Q. **W**HAT Marks or Characters necessarily belong to a Revelation which hath God for its Author? A. The whole of it, its *Doctrines*, its *Rules of Duty*, its *Motives*, the *Manner* of Propagating it ought to be rational, agreeable to our Idea of the wisdom and goodness of God, and conducive to reform, perfect and make happy Mankind.

Q. If we take the *Christian Revelation*, in its original Plainness, as delivered in the Holy Scriptures, do not all these Marks appear eminently in it? A. Yes. For Instance.

I. Q. Are not the *Credenda*, or the *Doctrines* proposed in it agreeable to Reason; have they not a Tendency to amend the *Minds* and *Lives* of Men; and do they not compose an excellent System of Belief?

Q. Which are the principal Doctrines in the Christian Revelation?

A. That there is *one God*, existent of himself. (1) That there is one only begotten *Son of God*, in whom dwells the Fulness of all divine Attributes, except Self-Origination. (2) That there is a *Holy Spirit*, derived also from the Father. That the Heavens and Earth were made by God, thro' the Operation of his Son. (3) That about 6000 Years ago this Earth was a confused Chaos, and new formed. (4) That God governs the World. (5) That Man was made innocent and happy. That Sin is the Original of all Disorders. (6) That the World was drowned. (7) That God revealed himself to the Patriarchs, and gave a Law to the *Jews*. (8) That God sent his Son into the World for the Redemption of
P Mankind;

1 This is demonstrable by the Light of Nature.

2 This and the next have no Absurdity in them.

3 No Part, or the whole, of the Heavens and Earth cou'd exist of it self.

4 This is agreeable to general Tradition, and to the Original of Laws and Arts.

5 This Doctrine is agreeable to our natural Notions of an Omnipresent, All-powerful, just and good Being.

6 No Doctrines are more consistent with our Ideas of a perfectly wise and happy *Creator*, with the Nature of *Sin*, and with the *State of the World*.

7 The History of all Nations backward terminate in a Deluge. There are plain Marks of it to this Day. Trees and Fish are found deep in the Ground.

8 This is agreeable to the State of Things at that Day, and is proved to be Fact by all the Old Testament History.

9 This

Mankind; has set up a Kingdom under him, calls Men into it, offers them Pardon and Assistance. (9) That God will Judge Mankind by Jesus Christ. (10) That the Body will be raised, and Men be happy or miserable, according to their Behaviour here. (11)

Q. Have

9 This was highly reasonable, and becoming God, as to every Branch of Christ's Work and Office, as Teacher, Sacrifice, Ruler. Of the Truth of the History of Jesus Christ there are unquestionable Testimonies. The Dignity of the Person is the chief Objection; but the Wisdom of God, who chose him, saw not fit to commit so important an Undertaking to any inferior Being.

10 A future Judgment is necessary to vindicate the Government of God, and to keep up Religion amongst Men. And the Son of God is an unexceptionable Judge.

11 The Doctrine of the Resurrection is not contrary to Reason; tho' it is not discoverable by it.

All Objections against the *Certainty* and *Possibility* of the Resurrection of the Dead are sufficiently remov'd by our Lord's general Answer, *Mat. xxii. 29. Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God.* The Power of God, the Extent of which no Creature knows, is a Bar to all Pleas of *Impossibility*. And the *Scriptures*, blessed be God for them, determine the *Certainty* of the Thing.

There were some Discoveries of this Doctrine made in former Ages, as appears from *Exod. iii. 6.* compar'd with *Mat. xxii. 32. Heb. xi. 9—16. Deut. xxxii. 39. Job xix. 25. Ezek. 37. Dan. xii. 2. 2 Maccab. 7.* In the New Testament it is spoke of as a Doctrine known and believed. *Luke xiv. 14. John xi. 24. chap. v. 29. Acts xxiv. 15. chap. xxvi. 6. 8.* The Facts recorded in the Old and New Testament help to confirm the Doctrine of a future general Resurrection, and make it exceeding credible. *1 Kings xvii.*

— *2 Kings iv. 18—37. Mark 5. 22. Luke vii. 11. John 39. Acts ix. 40.* To which may be added, that our

125 the First Fruit of the future Resurrection.

Q. Have not all these Doctrines a visible Tendency to reform the World from Idolatry and Wickedness; to give Men just Notions of God and of Sin; and to govern it by eternal Hopes and Fears? **A.** Yes.

P 2

Q. And

the Saints. After all this Evidence, *why shou'd it be thought a Thing incredible, that God will raise the Dead?* Is raising and restoring the Body any more incredible than forming it at first? Or, is the Reunion of Soul and Body any more incredible than uniting them at first? Cannot He, the Almighty He, who has done the One, also do the Other?

If it be *objected*, “that the Resurrection of the Body will be *Useless*, if not *disadvantageous*; that the Soul can need no bodily Organs, and will only be incumbered by them.” It is sufficient to answer, How do the presumptuous Objectors know this? Certainly we are so much Strangers to the World of Spirits, and their Mode of Perception and Action, as to be very incompetent Judges in this Affair. As the Body *may*, so it is reasonable to Judge, that when it becomes a spiritual, incorruptible Body, it *will* be an Advantage to both the Sensations and Operations of the Soul. And since the Resurrection of the Dead to Life eternal is urged as a Motive to Holiness, and one of the future Rewards; we may be sure, from the Wisdom and Goodness of God, that the Resurrection of the Body will contribute to the Soul's future Happiness, tho' we are unable to explain in what Manner it will do so.

The *Objection* taken from want of Parents at the Resurrection is frivolous; for it is God (not they) who forms our Bodies at first, and the same great Parent can form them anew.

As to the *Objection* drawn from the smallness of the Particles of Matter, their Attrition, Dispersion, Union with other Bodies; it is sufficient to reply, That He who can make the Particles of Light, after various Mixtures and Refractions, to paint on the Eye, or represent to the Soul, an ex-

Q. And do not all these Doctrines laid together make up a rational, consistent Scheme of Belief? A. Yes.

Q. Was such a Scheme ever proposed the World by any but Jesus Christ? No.

II. C

ast Image of a Person; He who directs every Particle of Matter to its proper Plant; He who gives Men Skill to separate Metals and Liquors after the most compounded Mixtures; He can fetch out of the Mass of Matter the Particles essential to every human Body, after ever so many and intricate Compositions.

The *Objection* from imperfect or emaciated Bodies, may be answered by distinguishing the *Essential* from the *Additional* Parts; or the original *Stamen*, Seed and Principle from the grosser Parts which only fill it up. These Latter may be incorporated with other Bodies, while God keeps the Former distinct, and in a Capacity of being recollected; so that every Soul shall have *its own Body*, or what was its essential Vehicle, Habitation or Organ.

See *Nieuwentit's Relig. Phil. V. III. p. 1025*

As the *Manner* of the Resurrection is not revealed, we do not pretend to explain it; but only to shew that a Resurrection is not impossible, or carrieth in it no Contradiction.

The *Objection* which St. Paul States 1 Cor. xv. 35. St Paul himself has answered. The Identity of the same Plant, or animal Body, is secured by the Identity of the original *Stamen* or Seed, which continues the same in all Growths or Declines. But *personal Identity* is secured by the same conscious Soul's inhabiting and actuating any System of Organized Matter, tho' that System be not numerically the same the Soul was once united to, according to Mr. Locke. But Dr. Butler observes, that all Attempts to define *personal Identity* wou'd but perplex it; as in the Cases of *Similitude* and *Equality*. Yet there is no Difficulty in ascertaining *identity*; for as upon two Triangles being compared, or view-

II. Q. Are not the *Agenda*, or *practical Duties* which the Christian Revelation requires agreeable to our natural Notions of God, most perfective of our Natures, and conducive to our Happiness? A. Yes.

Q. Must it not then be a System of the wisest and best *Precepts* that was ever taught? A. Yes.

Q. What is the Summary of the Christian Precepts? A. Gratitude, Love, Fear, Adoration, Resignation, Trust, Submission, Devotedness towards God; and returning to him thro' a Mediator * Justice, Equity, Truth, ed together, there arises to the Mind the Idea of *Similitude* or *Likeness*; or upon twice two and four, the Idea of *Equality*; so on the Consciousnesses of ones self, or on/s own Existence, in any two Moments, being compared, there immediately arises in the Mind the Idea of *personal Identity*; —and shews also that, That which is *my self* now, and that which was *my self* in any Time past, is one and the same self. Identity or the sameness of a *Plant* is said to consist in a Continuation of the same Life communicated, under the same Organization, to a number of the Particles of Matter, whether the same or not. This *Sameness* may do for the Purposes of Property, and the Uses of Life, in a *popular* Sense; but if every Particle of Matter is changed, it is not the same in a *Philosophical* Sense.

Butler's Anal. p. 301. 303.

* Going to God by Christ, is not a natural, but a *positive* Duty; yet Regards due to the *Son* and the *Spirit* arise from their *real Relations* to us, however discovered.

Butler's Anal. p. 152.

It shou'd seem, by the little which has hitherto been done in it, that it is too hard a Task for unassisted Reason to establish Morality in all its Parts upon its true Foundation, with a clear and convincing Light.

Lock's treat. of Christ. V. 2. 57.
P. 3, *Chari*

Charity, Reconciliation towards *Man*. Sobriety, Temperance, Patience, Contentment in *our selves*, with a Preference of the Soul to the Body, and a constant Regard to Immortality.

Q. Are not all these highly reasonable in themselves, perfective of our Natures, and of a peaceful and blessed Tendency? A. Yes.

Q. Is not this essential Goodness of Christianity an intrinsic, powerful Evidence of its being divine? A. Yes; for no evil Beings could be the Authors of a Constitution altogether holy and good.

Q. But of what Use are the *Positive Institutions* of Jesus Christ? A. They are apt Means to keep Men steady to the Practice of the great *moral Duties* *.

Q. If they are subservient to Religion and Happiness, is not the Appointing them an Instance of the Wisdom and Goodness of God? A. Yes.

Q. If the positive Precepts are given for the good of Men, the better to secure their Obedience to the eternal Laws of Righteousness, is it not unjust and impious to charge God as acting in this Case merely to manifest his absolute Dominion and Sovereignty? A. Yes.

* *Positive Institutions*, considered as Marks of God's Authority, and our Dependence; as Determinations of something proper to be determined, in the Exercise of our outward Piety; as Means whereby inward Religion may be cultivated and improved, are not slight Matters.

Connyb. p. 216.

Q. And

Q. And is it not unjust to charge Christianity with giving this Representation of God?

A. Yes.

III. Q. Are not the *Motives* by which Men are persuaded and encouraged, in the Christian Revelation, to be religious, suitable to the Wisdom of God, and answerable to the natural Expectations of Men? A. Yes.

Q. What are these Motives? A. The Acceptableness of true Repentance, and Assurance of Pardon upon such Repentance. The Offers of divine, supernatural Assistance to conquer and cure Mens Heedlessness, Prejudices, Passions, Lusts, Blindness. The Proposal of everlasting Rewards and Punishments to the Obedient and Disobedient.

IV. Q. Is not the *Manner* in which the Christian Revelation recommends Virtue and Duty, and in which it orders Religion to be propagated consonant to Reason, worthy of God, and suitable to the Faculties of Man? A. Yes.

Q. By what Instances does this appear? A. The *Duties* are fully and largely explained; they are inculcated with Weight and Authority; and are exemplified in the Lives of holy Persons. The *Motives* are plainly, affectionately and lively describ'd. The *Means of atoning for Sin* are clearly exhibited: Sin is exposed in its Deformity and Malignity;
Holiness

Holiness is shewed to be beautiful and necessary. Christian *Worshippers* are gathered to Societies, and brought under solemn *Blessings*; *Sensible Assurances* of Pardon are afforded; Christians are united to God, and to each other by *federal Rites*. A *Succession of Pastors* settled, for all the Purposes of Religion, the meanest Class, and the latest Generation may not be without Help in their great Interests.

Q. In what Manner doth the Christian Religion *not permit* the Pastors and Teachers to appoint to propagate its Doctrines, Precepts, or Faith and Obedience? A. Not by Cruelty and Force of Arms; which tempt Men to be Hypocrites, but can never convince the Judgment. *2 Cor. x. 4.* Not by Frauds, Deceits and Impostures, which are only to support a Lie, not the Truth of God. *2 Cor. ii. 17. 2 Pet. ii. 16.* Not by the Power of a blind implicit Faith, or taking Doctrine on Trust in the Word of others only, without Examination. *Col. ii. 2. 1 John iv. 1.*

Q. How are Ministers and Teachers to spread and propagate Religion? A. By the same Methods as are suitable to the rational Nature of Man, and to the Temper and Gravity of a divine Religion. Particularly, by *Preaching* (in the Professors of it;) by *Knowledge* (thorough Acquaintance with it;) by *Long suffering and Kindness* (even to the Enemies of it;) by the *Holy Ghost* (who enlightens,

1. tifies and comforts Souls by the Gospel Reli-
 2. gion) or by *Holiness of Spirit*, by *Love un-*
 3. *feigned* (in all the Entertainers of it;) by the
 4. *Word of Truth* (preach'd and pressed;) by
 5. the *Power of God* (whose miraculous Arm
 6. gave it Evidence and Support;) by the *Ar-*
 7. *mour of Righteousness* (unblemished Integrity)
 8. on the right Hand and on the Left. 2 Cor.
 9. vi. 7.

Q. What is a considerable Commendation
 of these Means and Methods, as well as a
 distinct Proof of the Truth of Christianity?

A. 1. That by these Means it was spread
 and planted, against all the publick, professed,
 established Religions in the World. *Acts* xxviii.
 22.—without the Force of Arms. *John* xviii.
 36.—and without the Laws of Princes and
 States to incourage it, or to make it Mens
 worldly Interest to profess it. 2. That by
 these Means it was spread and planted,—
 tho' it brought strange Doctrines with it, as
 that Sinners must be pardoned and saved thro'
 the Sacrifice, Merits and Power of a Person
 crucified at *Jerusalem*. *Acts* xvii. 18, 22. 1
Cor. i. 18, 21.—tho' it contained Rules of Ho-
 liness, Humility, Patience, Self-denial contrary
 to the Inclinations of Flesh and Blood. *Tit.* ii.
 11. *Mat.* v. vi. vii. *Col.* iii. 2—16. *Gal.* v. 16.
Rom. viii. 5—14.—tho' preach'd by Persons,
 in all outward Appearance very Mean; with-
 out Birth, Education, Learning, Wealth,
 Power, Interest, Credit. 2 Cor. iv. 7. *Acts* xiv.
 13

13. 1 *Cor.* iv. 11—, tho' it exposed the Entertainers of it to all manner of Reproaches and Sufferings, *Acts* xix. 23. 1 *Cor.* iv. 9. 2 *Cor.* vi. 4.

Q. Does not all this shew that Christianity is worthy of God, and highly useful to Men; that therefore from a Principle of Self-interest, as well as Gratitude to God, Men are under Obligation to receive it; for its essential intrinsick Goodness? A. Yes.

Q. Are not its essential Goodness, and first Success, without any secular Advantage, and against all possible Opposition, strong Presumptions in its Favour; that Christianity came from God? A. Yes. *See Sect. VI.*

S E C T. VII.

Positive Proofs of the Truth and divine Original of the Christian Religion.

Q. **B**ESIDES the experienced *Insufficiency* of Reason, in the corrupted State of the World as a Guide to Religion and Happiness; or, the Necessity and Usefulness of Revelation, and in particular of the Christian Revelation; and that all the *internal Marks* of a Revelation from God belong to that made by Jesus Christ; besides these Presumptions on its Side, have we plain, *positive Proofs* of the divine Mission of Jesus Christ, or of the divine Original of Christianity?

Q. In case these Proofs amounted only to strong Probability, is it not enough to determine us *to be Christians*? **A.** Yes, in regard, by becoming Christians, if Christianity prove false, we lose Nothing; if found true, we are infinite Gainers.

Q. By what short and clear Method may we prove the divine Original of Christianity?
A. By these Six Propositions following *.

I. That

* The Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Religion require the fewest *Positata*, namely, "That there was such Person as Jesus Christ; that he pretended to do such Things, and preached such Doctrines." Which yet need not be *ad*; for, what the Histories of that Age reported as a publick Affair; as one of the most eminent Transactions of the World; which made so much Noise; caused so many Changes; occasioned so many Wars; divided so many Hearts; sared so many Families; procured so many Deaths; was so long in acting; so much opposed; was the *Question* of the whole World; and was consigned by publick Records, &c. we'd not want Truth in Point of *Fact* and *Story*.

The Question is, was Jesus Christ *from God*? As to his reason; He was describ'd beforehand by such Characterisms, did fit him; and never did fit any but him. He wrought such Works as none else ever did; in particular, He rose from the Dead. Now if the Reports of credible Men, who attest these Facts, must not be trusted, there is not left any usual Instrument whereby God could, after the Manner of men, declare his Will to us; but either we must *never know* his Will; or God must tell it not *once*, but *always*; and not *only* always to *some Men*, but always to *all Men*. And then there would be no Use of History and Honesty.

Christianity paints the Devil in the worst Characters, and overthrows his Worship and Kingdom; it could not therefore *come from him*.

Tho' Christ was Prince of Judæa, in Right of his Mother;

great Miracles amongst Multitudes of 1
to prove his Mission from God, and the
of his Doctrine.

III. That God never wou'd have 1
Jesus Christ to have wrought these M
if he had been an Impostor, a Teac
Lies and Untruths, or the Author of
Religion: much less wou'd he have

ther; and of all the World in Right of his Father
was obedient to Laws, and aimed at no earthly Ad

By his Death he represented what Way his Follow
expect to be happy and enter Heaven, namely, thro
ings. He propos'd no worldly Ends to his Discip
of whom these Things are true, must be more tha
He must be what he profess'd to be.

As to his DOCTRINE, it was as divine as his
That it is honestly transmittd, our chief Trust i
Wisdom and Goodness of Providence.—It wou'd be In
and Folly to send a Footman to command *Cæsar*

him from the Dead, as we have abundant Proof he did.

IV. The exact Completion of all the Prophecies of the Old Testament concerning Christ; or his sustaining every antient Character under which the Messiah is describ'd. And the Accomplishment of those Prophecies Christ himself and his Apostles delivered concerning future Events, carry in them irresistible Evidence of a divine Hand.

V. Vast Numbers in the Days of the Apostles, and in every following Age, have died for Christ, and shed their Blood in the Cause of Christianity; many of whom were Men of Learning, Judgment and Prudence.

VI. The New Testament contains the Revelation God made by Jesus Christ; and the History of the great Things he did to prove his divine Mission. It is a credible History; and was wrote by Men who had extraordinary Assistance or Inspiration from God.

The First Branch of Proof.

Q. Which is the *first* Proposition in order to prove the divine Original of Christianity.

A. That about 1700 Years ago, there was such a Person as JESUS CHRIST in the World, who lived in the Land of Canaan, and died at Jerusalem.

Q. Do not Friends and Enemies, Jews and Gentiles confess this Fact? A. Yes.

Q. Is it possible, in the nature of Things, that

Q

182 *The Christian Catechism.*

that it cou'd have been universally believ'd if it had not been true? A. No; for there cou'd not be any *Cause* of such a universal belief, but the real Existence of Jesus Christ, and no Effect can be produced without a proportionable Cause.

Q. May we not then be as sure there is such a Person as Jesus Christ, as if a thousand credible Witnesses shou'd affirm, upon Oath, that they saw him? A. Yes.

Q. By what Instance can you illustrate this Point? A. It cou'd never have been believ'd all over *Britain*, and *Europe*, that there were such Men as King *Henry VIII.* *Oliver Cromwell*, or *Lewis XIV.*, if there had never been such Men.

Q. Is it any Objection to this, that Christ has not been seen for many Ages? A. No; for no more have *Moses*, *Julius Caesar*, *Alexander the Great*; yet none deny that these Men once lived; Thousands never see their own King, yet never doubt of his Existence.

The Second Branch of Proof.

Q. Which is the *second* Proposition in order to prove the divine Original of Christianity? A. That Jesus Christ wrought many and great Miracles amongst Multitudes of People, to prove his Mission from God, and the Truth of his Doctrine.

Q. Since it has been already shown, that the Doctrines of Christ are reasonable in themselves,

selves, and conducive to the Happiness of Mankind (Sect. VI.) are they not therefore capable of coming from God? A. Yes.

Q. Are they not also of Worth and Importance enough to justify God in sending a Messenger to teach them to the World, and to persuade Men to believe and obey them? A. Yes.

Q. How did Jesus Christ prove he was sent from God, to preach these Truths to Men? A. By Miracles.

Q. What is a Miracle? A. A Miracle, in the *Theological* Sense, taking in the *End* for which it is wrought, is a Work effected in a Manner unusual, or different from the common and regular Method of Providence, by the Intervention either of God himself, or of some other intelligent Agent superior to Man, for the Proof or Evidence of some particular Doctrine, or in Attestation to the Authority of some particular Person *.

Q²

Q. What

* As to the Nature of Miracles observe,

1. Miracles are not to be defined by any *absolute Difficulty* in the Nature of the thing. All things being equally easy to God.

2. Nor are they to be defined by such an Effect as cou'd not have been produced by any less Power than the *divine Omnipotence*; since we know not what *Power* God has communicated to created Beings.

3. Nor are Miracles to be defined by that which is against the *Course of Nature*, meaning thereby the natural Power of created Beings. To stop the Sun, is no more against the *Course of Nature* in this Sense, than to continue its

184 *The Christian Catechism.*

Q. What was the Manner, and what were the Circumstances and Characters of Christian Miracles? A. They were wrought *publicly*, in great Towns; and before Multitudes of Enemies as well as Friends; *clearly*, with any Artifice or Cover; they were *Great* in their Nature; *Merciful* in their Intention

in its Motion. But if by the Course of Nature be meant (usually signifies) the *constant uniform Manner* of God's acting, a Miracle is contrary to it by the Interposition of an intelligent Agent superior to Man. But it is hard to discover from the *Work it self* (unless so singular one as *Rising from the Dead*) whether it be done by the Interposition of a good or evil Spirit.

4. Nor are Miracles to be defined by such Effects as God and good Spirits can produce. For there is no Reason to suppose the Wonders attributed in Scripture to evil Spirits to be mere *Præstigiæ*, Sleights or Delusions, *Imposition* on the Senses, and not real Effects: Since thus to impose on the Senses is to all Intents as true and great a Miracle as making real changes in the Things themselves.

See Dr. Clark on Rev. &

When Miracles are not opposed by a Power plainly superior; nor brought to attest a Doctrine either *contradictory* to itself, or *vicious* in its Tendency and Consequences; the Doctrine so attested must be looked on as divine, and the Worker of the Miracles is to be entertained as having in his Power a Commission from God.

Observe 1. Miracles, to the Disciples who saw them, sensible Demonstrations of our Lord's divine Commission.

2. To those who have lived since that Age, they are certain Demonstrations of the same Truth, as the Testimony of those first Disciples, who were Eye witnesses of them, is plain and true.

These two Propositions shew the Nature of the Evidence arising from Miracles.

See Dr. Sykes concerning the Credibility of Miracles in *Revelation*.

*Various in their Kinds; Lasting in their Effects; Uncontrouled by any opposite or higher Power; Immediate in their Operation.**

Q 3

Q. Which

* There will be such a manifest Plainness and Sincerity, such a Freedom and Openess of Behaviour in a good Man, acting under a divine Influence, and sure of divine Assistance, as cannot be found in the Tricks of an Impostor. But I do not apprehend, that such things as seem most to exceed the Powers of human Nature, done by any Person, are, in themselves, a sufficient Testimony that he is sent of God; unless they can be proved to exceed the Power of other Beings superior to us, and to be done by the immediate Interposition of God himself. Nor is it inconsistent with the divine Goodness to permit Things to happen which may prove a powerful Temptation to Men to forsake the Truth and believe an Imposture. But it is not consistent with God's Wisdom or Goodness to be Himself the Instrument of confirming any false Pretences to divine Authority and Inspiration. Nor with the Character of any good Being whatsoever to lend his Assistance for the support of an Imposture.

The only *End* and *Use* of Miracles, when wrought by the Assistance of God, or good Spirits, is to confirm a Person's Mission from God. They are not designed to prove the Principles of natural Religion,—Since Revelations and Miracles are to be judged of by these Dictates: Yet they may be wrought to recover in Men a Sense of these Principles.

The Evidence that Christ wrought Miracles is the same as for his Being, Preaching, and Dying on a Cross.

RULES of judging *by whom* Miracles are performed.

I. As to the *Works*. 1. The Things must be possible, which excludes *Transubstantiation*. 2. They must be probable or Credible, which cuts off *Mahomet's* Journey to Heaven. A Thing is then only incredible, when it is in itself impossible; or when no just Reason can be assign'd for doing it. 3. They must be consistent with God's Perfections of Wisdom and Goodness. 4. Open in the Eye of the World. 5. Number is an Advantage to their Force. 6. Conveying the

Q. Which were some of the eminent Miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, in this Manner, and with these Circumstances, to prove his Mission from God? **A.** He changes Water into Wine at a publick Marriage Feast *John ii.* When he was at *Cana*, a second time, he heals a Nobleman's Son at *Capernaum* by a word. *John iv. 43, &c.* He cures :
 Ma

the Power to others adds great Strength to the Proof. 7
 Testimony of the Facts must be sufficient.

II. As to PERSONS, they must be, 1. Men in their Senses
 2. Good Men. 3. Uniform in their Messages.

III. As to their ENDS. 1. Miracles cannot be wrought to overthrow natural Religion. 2. Nor to introduce a false Object of Worship. 3. Nor to contradict a former Revelation. The proper End is, to lead Men into just Sentiments of God; to direct them how to worship him; to recover Men from Ignorance; to reform them from Vice; and to lead them to Virtue, Goodness, Happiness.

Objection. Is it good Reasoning to prove Miracles to be wrought of God, by appealing to the Doctrines or Ends and then to prove the Doctrines, or justify the Ends, by appealing to the Miracles? *Answer.* The very Doing of a Miracle argues the Assistance of some superior Agent; and the End discovers the Nature and Disposition of that Being by whose Assistance it is performed. The Doctrines prove not the Assistance of a superior Power; but whether the Assistance is given by a good or a bad one. The Miracles prove not the Goodness of the Doctrine, but that he who preaches the good Doctrine, so confirmed, acts by an Authority superior to his own. Neither of them separately prove the divine Mission; but where both concur, they certainly prove this Proposition, "That such a Person acts by the Authority of some superior, good and powerful Agent."

Christ is to be considered, I. As a Prophet sent from God And the grand Characters of his divine Mission were his

Man who had been a Cripple thirty eight Years, *John* v. 1—. He heals a *Roman* Captain's Servant of a Palsy by a Word. *Mat.* viii. 5. He raiseth from the Dead a Widow's only Son, amidst a great Croud, as he was

cellent Doctrines, confirmed by wonderful Works, proper to convince all Persons, and not peculiar to the *Jews*.

II. As the Prophet (or the Messiah) antiently promised to and expected by the *Jewish* Nation. And the Truth of Christianity does now depend on both these, because Christ claimed this double Character.

Candler's Vind. of the Christ. Relig.

As God had promised to send a great Teacher, and there might be many Pretenders to the Office; it was necessary he should be distinguished. He was so, especially by Miracles, which 1. Were the Evidence of the Mission of the antient Prophets. 2. Were a quick Evidence, and wrought speedy Conviction. 3. Were an Evidence suited to all Capacities.

Bradley's View of Christianity.

I. Nothing is more reasonable than to believe Things, when God, has revealed them.

II. Nothing is more reasonable than to believe that God has revealed them, when they are taught and delivered to us by a Person indued with such Powers and Authority from God as *Jesus Christ* shewed.

III. Nothing is more reasonable than to believe that such Doctrines were taught by *Jesus Christ*, when they have been transmitted down and delivered to us in the Way and Manner in which his have.

Buffier's Scheme of the Sciences, in Repub. of Letters March 1730.

Had any *Frauds* been detected in the Miracles of Christ, or his Apostles, the *Jews* would have published Books to inform the World of it. But no such Books were published; for the later *Jews* never quote or refer to any such written Testimonies; nor do the Apostles ever preach or write against any such Books; which, had they been extant, they would have done, as their Cause required it.

carrying

carrying to his Grave. *Luke vii. 11—*. He calms a Tempest. *Mark iv. 35—*. He cures a Madman, and permits the Demons to enter into the Swine. *Mat. viii. 28*. He raiseth from the Dead the Daughter of *Jairus*, a Ruler of the *Jewish* Synagogue. *Luke viii. 41—*. He cureth an incurable Flux. *Luke viii. 43*. He feeds at one Time five thousand, at another Time four thousand Men, besides Women and Children, with a few Loaves and Fishes. *Mark vi. 30. Chap. viii. 1—*. He cures a Man born blind. *John ix*. He heals a Woman who had been bowed together eighteen Years. *Luke xiii. 10*. He raiseth *Lazarus* from the Dead, amidst Numbers of Friends and Enemies, after he had been several Days dead and buried. *John xi*. He struck down the Guards who came to seize him; and healed *Malchus's* Ear. *Mat. xxvi. 51. Luke xxii. 51. John xviii. 6*. He communicated a Power of working Miracles to his Disciples. *Mat. x. Luke x.*

Q. What were some of the miraculous Appearances of God, in behalf of Jesus Christ, to attest his divine Mission? A. God orders a Herald, who was miraculously born, to proclaim his Approach. He causeth a Virgin to conceive him. He sends Angels with Messages concerning him, to *Zechariah*, to the Virgin *Mary*, to *Joseph*, to the Shepherds, to the *Arabian* Philosophers. *Mat. i. and ii. Luke i. and ii.* God owneth him by a Voice from Heaven. *Mat. iii.* And by a glorious Trans

transfiguration, and the Appearance of *Moses* and *Elias*. *Mat.* xvii. At his Execution there is amazing Darkness, with Earthquakes; graves opened and the Dead arose. Angels testify his Resurrection and Ascension to Heaven. *Mat.* xxvii, and xxviii. *Luke* xxiii. *John* . *Acts* i.

The Third Branch of Proof.

Q. Which is the *third* Proposition in order to prove the divine Original of Christianity? A. That God wou'd never have suffered Jesus Christ to have wrought these miracles, if he had been an Impostor, a Teacher of Lies and Untruths, or the Author of a false Religion. Much less wou'd he have raised him from the Dead; as we have abundant Proof he did.

Q. Were Christ's miraculous Works produced by any *natural Efficiency*? A. No; for there was no Power in a *Word* or *Touch* to heal Diseases, open blind Eyes, raise the Dead.

Q. Cou'd they be the Product of any *settled Laws* in the Creation? A. No; for they were wrought at the Will of a free Agent, upon sudden Occasions, to prove his Mission from God.

Q. Cou'd they be *juggling Delusions*? A. No; for they were done by open Day; before the Learned; in the Sight of Enemies very

very powerful; they were oft repeated, and their Effects were permanent.

Q. Cou'd they be wrought by *evil Spirits*?

A. No; for they were wrought by a Person of eminent Virtue, to confirm a Doctrine which describes evil Spirits in most odious Characters, and which condemns them and their Works.

Q. Wou'd Evil Spirits thus uniformly and steadily promote Holiness and Virtue, and overthrow their own Credit and Empire?

A. No.

Q. Or, wou'd God suffer good Men to be so unavoidably and perpetually imposed on and deceived? A. No.

Q. May not Miracles be considered as God, the King of Heaven's *Great Seal*? A. Yes.

Q. Wou'd God do, what no wise and honest King will ever do, set his Seal to confirm a known Lie; or impower an Impostor to cheat the World with Falsehoods? A. No.

Q. If God shou'd act thus, wou'd not upright People, who sought the Truth, be necessarily imposed on and deceived in Matters of the greatest Moment, without a Remedy, or any Means of discovering the Abuse? A. Yes.

Q. But is it consistent with the Wisdom, Justice and Goodness of God thus to act? A. No.

Q. Therefore, when Jesus Christ wrought, and inabled his Apostles to work a Course of
Miracle

The Christian Catechism. 191

Miracles to prove his Mission from God, in order to publish a new Revelation; have we not all the Reason in the World to receive him as a commissioned Officer, or a Teacher sent from God? A. Yes.

The Resurrection of Christ proved.

Q. Moreover, did Jesus Christ rise from the Dead; and rise at the Time he foretold he wou'd rise? A. Yes.

Q. Is not this One, (had we no other) an uncontestible Proof of his divine Mission? A. Yes. *Acts* i. 3. *Rom.* i. 4. *1 Cor.* xv. 13 —.

Q. Did any Impostor or Enthusiast ever rise from the Dead? A. No.

Q. Cou'd any but God raise up Christ from the Dead? A. No.

Q. Is not the Proof, that Christ did rise from the Dead, as strong and clear as of any attient Facts? A. Yes.

Q. Where is the Evidence of this Fact recorded? A. In the Books of *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*; in the Epistles of *Paul, Peter, James, Jude*, and in the Revelations.

Q. Are not these Books, which have stood the Trial of all Ages, as good Evidence as if the Authors of 'em had existed thro' every age, retained an exact Memory of the Things recorded, and bore a living Attestation to 'em? A. Yes.

Q. What must, if attended to, fully convince Men that the Apostles gave undeniable Proof.

Proof of Christ's Resurrection? A. That the Report of it, both by their Preaching and Writing obtained Credit in the World, amongst *all Sorts of Men*, at *all Times*, and as soon as published; and at *all Places*, even at *Jerusalem*, where Christ had been, a few Weeks before, publicly crucified.

Q. Is it improbable the Apostles could have gained one Convert, if they had not given sufficient Proof of so great and extraordinary an Event? A. Yes *.

Q. What was the Evidence the Apostles gave, that Jesus, their Master, rose from the Dead? A. They saw him alive with their own Eyes; conversed freely and frequently with him, by hearing him talk, and talking to him; they knew his Face and Voice; they eat and drank with him; and knew his Voice at Prayer; they felt his Body, and saw the Marks of his Crucifixion. He was seen by Women, by Men, at various Times, in various Places. Angels testify his Resurrection.

* Q. Are Men wicked Impostors and Cheats for doing this? A. No.

Q. Did the Apostles get any thing; Honour, Credit, Wealth, or any worldly Advantage, by publishing the doctrine of Christ's Resurrection? A. No.

Q. Would the Apostles (and others) have forsaken their old Religion, in which they were Safe; and have embraced and propagated Christ's, with the utmost Danger, if they did not believ'd it true? A. No.

Q. But could they have believed it true, if he had not kept his Promise of Rising again? A. No.

so do Soldiers, the *Jews* own Guards. Above 500 Persons saw him ascend towards Heaven. The Apostles were indued by Jesus Christ, with many miraculous Powers and Gifts; they were inabled to speak all Languages, to understand all Scriptures, to cure all Diseases, and to raise the Dead. They also sealed the Truth of their Testimony with their Blood.

Q. Is not this Evidence sufficient to satisfy every serious Inquirer of the Truth of Christ's Resurrection? A. Yes.

Q. Is there any Room to question, whether the Records of these Facts, in the several Books of the New Testament, are Genuine?

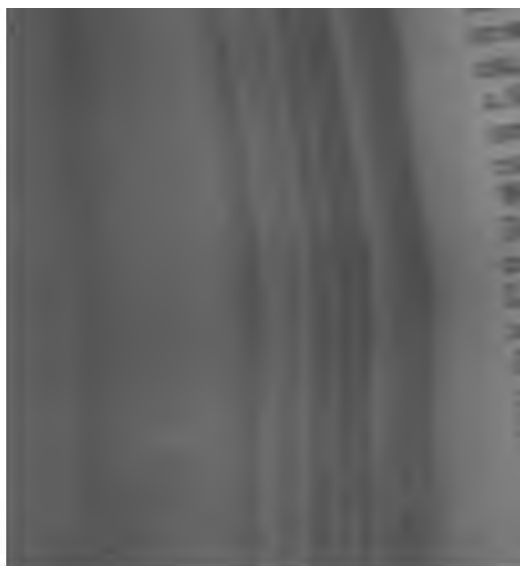
A. No; for a Chain of subsequent Facts, the Conversion of Towns and Countries, the Planting of Churches upon this Principle, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, confirm both the Truth of the Facts, and the Genuineness of the Records*.

Q. If sufficient Evidence of Christ's Resurrection was given at first; is that Evidence at all weakned by length of Time? A. No; it is rather strengthened, as it has stood the Examination of every Age, without their having found any Flaw in it.

Objections Answered.

Q: But are there not Objections made to

* The Conversion of St. Paul is a single, but a noble Proof of the Resurrection and Glory of Jesus Christ.



to the *Jews*, who yet were concerned in the Matter.

is answered? A. That where-
elves enough, good Men and
or Jury complain for want
were *chosen*, that they

The *Jews* had also the E-
own Guards. They had all
their Power, yet never ot-
them as Cheats, much less
as false Witnesses. Besides,
seized all Right to see Christ
put him to Death: And at
commission to them was deter-
iii. 37—39.

third Objection? A. That
ore the Time he foretold;
the Time, to prevent a Dis-
Appearance of a Fraud.

is answered? A. Christ arose
were all there; so that there
oud, but a real Resurrection.
Morning of the third Day,
that Phrase, *after three Days*;
used, *Luke xxiv. 21*. So that
ording to the Time predic-

the *fourth* Objection, to the
Christ's Resurrection? A. That

Mat. xxvii. 63.

the *Truth* and to the *Evidence* of the Resurrection of Christ? A. Yes.

Q. Which is the *first* Objection to the Resurrection of Christ? A. That the Resurrection being an Event against the Course of Nature, and impossible, no Evidence can be sufficient to gain Credit to it.

Q. How is this answered? A. 1. That a Resurrection, or a Person's living again, after he has been Dead, is an Object of Sense; and, by the help of our Senses, we may judge a Man to be as certainly alive, as that he is certainly Dead. 2. The Resurrection is contrary to no Principle of Reason, but every Way conformable to it; nor can have any Difficulty at all in it compared with the Power of God; which causes a Resurrection of Life over the Face of the Earth every Spring; and is causing new Life to exist in a thousand Instances every Day. 3. Credible Testimony ought to be admitted in Cases, which, at first Sight, may appear not only improbable, but impossible; as that fluid Water shou'd ever become consistent and hard; which to Persons under the Torrid Zone has appear'd impossible. So that being contrary to the Course or the Laws of Nature, is only being contrary to our Preconceptions of it.

Q. What is the *second* Objection, to the Evidence of the Resurrection of Christ? A. That Christ appeared only to chosen Witnesses

1; and not to the *Jews*, who yet were principally concerned in the Matter.

Q. How is this answered? **A.** That where ere are witnesses enough, good Men and so, no Judge or Jury complain for want more. These were *chosen*, that they might be good. The *Jews* had also the Evidence of their own Guards. They had all the Witnesses in their Power, yet never offered to detect them as Cheats, much less punish them as false Witnesses. Besides, the *Jews* had forfeited all Right to see Christ live, by having put him to Death: And at his Death his Commission to them was determined. *Mat. xxiii. 37—39.*

Q. What is a *third* Objection? **A.** That Christ arose before the Time he foretold; which hastning the Time, to prevent a Discovery, has the Appearance of a Fraud.

Q. How is this answered? **A.** Christ arose while the Guards were all there; so that there w'd be no Fraud, but a real Resurrection. He arose on the Morning of the third Day, which Sense that Phrase, *after three Days*; is constantly used, *Luke xxiv. 21.* So that Christ rose according to the Time predicted*.

Q. What is the *fourth* Objection, to the Evidence of Christ's Resurrection? **A.** That

* See *Grotius* on *Mat. xxvii. 63.*

the Story of the Disciples stealing away the Body of Jesus, is a true Story and real

2. How is this Objection answered?

1. It supposes Christ himself to be in a which was to take effect after his Death when it wou'd be too late to reap any Benefit by it. But no Man ever carried off an Imposture for nothing; or brought his Death and Ruin into his Scheme. 2. It supposes that Christ, by giving Notice of Resurrection, put the Rulers and the Body upon their guard against a Cheat; that yet a few illiterate, spiritless Men could outwit them all, and manage it with Success against the Power and Policy of *Jews* and *Romans* forewarn'd of the Design. Nay, it supposes the utmost actual Precautions, Guards, Seals, heavy Stones; every thing that cou'd be done to prevent or detect a Fraud of no Effect, against a few faint-hearted Fishermen; who cou'd remove a prodigious heavy Stone, break bands of Iron; open a Sepulchre, unbind a dead Corpse, wrap up in twenty or thirty Yard of waxen-Rollers, carry off a Corpse in a Moon-Night, conceal it in a City filled with People come up from all Parts, and all their Enemies and do all this amidst a Guard of sixteen soldiers, and yet be undiscovered. 4. It supposes different Principles and Hopes to be in the Apostles, than what appear to be in the *Evangelists*. For they had no Thoughts of their M

Resurrection; they expected a temporal Prince who shou'd not die. What Service cou'd a dead Corpse do them upon their Notions? Or, if they expected a Resurrection, cou'd they effect it by stealing his Corpse? 5. Every Circumstance agrees to the Supposition of a real Resurrection. A vast Stone suddenly removed; affrighted Guards; broken Seals; Grave-Clothes lying in Order in the Sepulchre; bribed Soldiers; invented Stories. 6. The great Caution the *Jewish* Rulers and Council used shews, that (from our Lord's great Character) they feared his Predictions of his Resurrection might be made good. 7. Their future Conduct shews, that the *Jews* did not believe this Story; for (1) They never called the Apostles to an Account for the Fraud; nor so much as once charge them with it; but take just such Measures Men convinced, but hardned against Conviction, always take. (2) King *Agrippa* cou'd not suppose there was any Cheat in the Matter, when he declares, *almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian. Acts xxvi. 28.* Nor does *Galat's* Advice go upon the Supposition of a Cheat. *Acts v. 38.* (3) The Disciples are under no Concern to reture a Story, which was so altogether groundless and ridiculous.

Q. What is a *fifth* Objection, to the Evidence of the Resurrection of Christ? **A.** That it was only an Apparition, and not his *real Body*; since he avoids being touched, ap-

pears and disappears so suddenly, and comes thro' Doors which were shut.

Q. How is this Objection answered? A. In general it is answered, that Objections and Presumptions are of no Weight against positive Evidence: We have positive Proof, even the Testimony of those who saw, heard, and felt him. Particularly it is answered, 1. That when Christ says, *touch me not*, he only means, let these Caresses alone at present, I am not yet going away, there will be other Opportunities of familiar Converse. 2. When he appears to two Disciples in their Journey, their Perswasion of his being still dead, his differing Aspect, Dress, Speech, and Walking in the same Line with them, or by their Side, and being duskish, might all contribute to their not knowing him. But when Lights came in, and they had a direct View of him, they soon knew him. 3. As to his *disappearing*; he did so before his Death; when the Reality of his Body is not questioned. Nor is it any Proof of an Object's not being a real material Body, that we suddenly lose Sight of it. His coming in when the *Doors were shut*, may only mean, at or after the Time of shutting the Doors. However it is very unreasonable to suppose, we must prove there was nothing miraculous about Christ, when we are supporting the Credit of the greatest Miracles.

Q. W

Q. What is the *sixth* Objection to the Evidence of our Saviour's Resurrection? **A.** That some of the witnesses were Women, frightened with an Apparition, which has often made great Impressions on weak Imaginations.

Q. How is this answered? **A.** 1. That this Apparition was Angels, we believe on the Credit of the Evangelists. And they were properly employ'd by God as Ministers in this great Work, and whose Testimony may be trusted. 2. Women, in their Senses, are admitted in all Courts as good Evidence of what they see and hear: nor do they appear in the least credulous, for they could hardly believe their own Story. However, they were good Evidence the Body was gone and the Linnen left.

Q. What is the *seventh* Objection to the Evidence of our Lord's Resurrection? **A.** That the Resurrection being a matter of Fact, it is not proper to have Recourse to another matter of Fact as Proof, when the Facts have no Dependence one on another. As *St. Paul's* healing a Sick Man, is no Evidence that Christ rose from the dead.

Q. How is this answered? **A.** The Spirit of Power which appear'd in the Number of Miracles wrought by the Apostles (as also the Spirit of Knowledge and Courage which appeared in their Speeches and Apologies) proved

proved that these Men were *authorized Messengers*, whose Reports might be depended on. Their Veracity is hereby asserted. Nor cou'd they have these Powers but from a risen, ascended, powerful Saviour. *John xv. 26, 27. Acts i. 4. chap. v. 32. 1 John v. 9, 10.*

Q. What is the *eighth* Objection to the Evidence of our Lord's Resurrection? A. That suppose the Apostles gave good Proof of the Resurrection of Christ, what is this to us, who are not Witnesses to those Proofs.

Q. How is this answered? A. The Proofs they gave were early *recorded*, by many Writers of undoubted Credit; and are transmitted down by infallible Means to us, which convince us, "That the first Christians had sufficient Grounds of Faith;" and if they had, the certain Tradition of this, in written Records, is sufficient Ground of Faith to us, if considered in concurrence with the essential Goodness and Divinity of the Christian Revelation; and its Fitness above all other Institutions, to promote the Perfection and Happiness of Mankind. The Apostles being dead, yet speak and bear witness, as if still alive.

Q. What is the *ninth* Objection to the Evidence of our Saviour's Resurrection? A. That tho' the Evidence of the *Sincerity* of the Apostles is good, namely, their dying in the Cause.

Cause; yet this is no Reason for receiving their Doctrine, since *Enthusiasts* may die in defence of Error; and *Rogues* will deny Facts, with Ropes about their Necks, and Death in their Face.

Q. How is this answered? A. The case of *Doctrines* is quite different from that of *Facts*; an honest Man may believe an erroneous Doctrine to be true; and a weak or useless Doctrine to be important; but he cannot believe a *Fact* to be done in his Sight, which never was done. And tho' I am not obliged to believe another Man's *Opinion*, because he is *sincere* in it; yet if upright Men report a *Fact*, of which they are proper Judges, I am bound to give them Credit.

As to *Criminals*, they deny Facts in hope of Life, and to escape Death; and suffer against their Will; which is no way parallel to Mens voluntary asserting a Fact at the hazard or expence of their Lives, and which they might have saved by denying it; or only by *Silence*, which was all their Enemies required. In one case the Temptation is strong to deny the Truth, namely, Life: In the other there is no worldly Temptation at all to invent and stand to a Falshood.

Q. What is the *tenth* Objection to the Evidence of Christ's Resurrection? A. That *most Countries* had but the Testimony of a *single Apostle*.

Q. How

to his Limbs, &c. was a fresh Witness
sides, when the People of different Co
compared Notes, and found their Accou
Proofs agree, this wou'd be a great
on to the Evidence. As when twelve
are examined asunder, and all agree,
stronger Proof of the Truth of a Fact
if the same twelve agree, when exami
together.

Q. Upon the whole, are not the
of Christ's Resurrection clear and 1
and the Objections against it weak and
A. Yes.

Q. If Christ be risen, must not Chri
be from God; and does not our F
Christ stand upon an immoveable F
tion? A. Yes*.

acter under which the Messiah is described: And the Accomplishment of the Prophecies which Christ himself and his Apostles delivered, carry in them irresistible Evidence of a divine Hand*.

Q. Is it undeniable that the Books of the Old Testament were wrote several hundred Years before? A. Yes.

Q. Do these Books concur in describing One certain great Person, who was to arise in a future Age; as to his Family, the Time and Place of his Birth, his personal Properties, his Works, his Sufferings, the Time and Manner of his Death, his Resurrection, Ascension, his sending down the Holy Ghost, and his Success in erecting a Kingdom which shou'd last for ever? A. Yes†.

Q. From

* It was becoming God, who intended to send his Son on the great Errand of Man's Redemption, to *draw his Picture*, so much to the Life and Likeness, that when the Original was brought into View, he might be known and distinguished by it amongst all upright and well disposed Men, who desired to see and own the Truth. Nor cou'd it be reasonably expected, that any, who made such Pretensions as the Son of God did, shou'd find Credit and Acceptance in the World, unless Men had been prepar'd to expect him, and had infallible Marks whereby to know him.

Sherlock on Provid. p. 341.

Stackhouse on the Bible, p. 1363.

† A few of these prophetick Characters follow, Gen. 22. 18. *In thy Seed shall ALL Nations of the Earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my Voice.* ch. 28. 14. Gen. 49. 10. *The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, untill Shiloh come; and to him shall the*

it was impossible for any Impostor to assume all these Characters, and thereby deceive Mankind.

Q. Did no one else but Jesus Christ ever pretend to them all? A. No.

Q. How did Jesus Christ prove that he had a right to assume the Title and Character of the promised Messiah? A. By his Miracles.

Q. As the antient Predictions in the *Jewish* Books were punctually fulfilled in Jesus Christ; So did CHRIST himself (and his Apostles) foretel many remarkable Events, many of which are actually come to pass? A. Yes.

Q. Which are some of the most remarkable Predictions of Jesus Christ? A. Upon the first calling of his Apostles He promises to make them *Fishers of Men*. He foretells his own Death about thirty times, with all the Circumstances of it, which depended on the free agency of other Men; As, in what Place he shou'd die, by whose Counsel, who shou'd betray him, who deny him, who condemn him, what Sort of Abuses he should receive, what wou'd be the Conduct of his Disciples. He foretold, that he shou'd rise again, and at what time; that he shou'd ascend to Heaven; and that he wou'd send down the Holy Spirit after his Ascension. That he would enable his Apostles to work as great Miracles as himself. That *Jerusalem* shou'd be destroy'd, the Temple burnt, the Jews rejected. That the Gospel shou'd be preached to the Gentiles, and shou'd

thou'd prevail. That the Apostles shou'd be persecuted and put to Death. That Families shou'd be Irreconcilably divided. In what manner Peter shou'd die. That many false Christs wou'd arise. That his Kingdom and Church shou'd stand every Shock, and never be overthrown *.

Q. Which were some of the remarkable Predictions of the APOSTLES? A. They

* Mat. 4. 19. Follow me, and I will make you Fishers of Men. Mat. 16. 21— chap. 20. 18—. From that time Jesus began to shew unto his Disciples, how that he must go unto JERUSALEM, and suffer many things of the Elders, Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third Day.— They shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, scourge, crucify him. Mat. 26. 23. He who dippeth his Hand with me in the Dish, the same will betray me. ver. 31. All ye shall be offended because of me (or will desert me) this Night. The Shepherd will be smitten, and the Sheep scattered. ver. 34. This Night, before Cock crowing, thou wilt thrice deny me. John 14. 16, 17. 26. chap. 15. 26. chap. 16. 13. I will send the Spirit of Truth; He will guide you into all Truth, and will testify of me. Mark 16. 17, 18. John 14. 12. In my Name they shall cast out Devils, speak with new Tongues,—do the Works I do, and greater. Mat. 23. 24—. chap. 24. 2—51. Mark 13. Luke 21. Your House is left unto you desolate.—There shall not be one Stone left upon another, &c. Mat. 24. 14. The Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the World—. Luke 13. 38—. They shall come from the East, West, North, South, and sit down in the Kingdom of God,—and you shall be thrust out. Mat. 10. 17. John 16. 2. They will deliver you up to Councils, and Scourge you.—Whosoever killeth you, will think he doth God service. Luke 12. 49—53. The Father will be against the Son, and the Son against the Father, &c. John. 21. 18. When thou art old, another shall bind thee. Mat. 16. 18. chap. 24. 14. chap. 28. 19. The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

foretold the Rise, Progress, and Ruin of the *Romish* Antichristian Kingdom, in many and very plain Characters; with the Persecutions of the Faithful, and the Safety of the Church. They foretold the cutting off of the *Jews*, the Conversion of the *Gentiles*. With the recovery of the *Jews* after a long Period of Time*.

Q. Were

* 2 Thess. 2. 3—12. *The Man of Sin shall be revealed—who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is Worshipped (above Kings and Emperors)—whose coming is after the working of Satan—with lying Wonders.—who believeth a Lie. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3.—Some will depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrines concerning Demons (or Souls departed) speaking Lies in Hypocrisy, forbidding to marry, commanding to abstain from Meats, &c. 1 John 4. 1, 6.—This is Antichrist, whereof you have heard it shou'd come, and even now already is in the World. They are of the World, speak of the World; and the World heareth them. Rev. 13. 14, 16, 17, 18.—I saw a Beast rise out of the Sea.—He made War with the Saints,—caused that no Man shou'd buy or sell, but he who had the Mark of the Beast.—They are the Spirits of Demons, working Miracles—The great Whore—with whom the Kings of the Earth have committed Fornication—having a golden Cup in her Hand.—She was drunk with the Blood of the Saints.—Kings have given their Power to the Beast.—BABYLON is fallen, is fallen, &c. See Lowman on the Revel. Rom. 11. 11, 12—25. If the Fall of them be the Riches of the World, and the Diminution of them the Riches of the *Gentiles*, how much more their Fulness. — Blindness in part is happened to ISRAEL, untill the Fulness of the *Gentiles* be come in; then all Israel shall be saved.*

It is worthy to be observed.

1. That these New Testament Prophecies are many of them a Continuation and Explication of the Oracles and Prophecies of the Old Testament, which shews, that the same

Sp

Q. Were not the Accomplishment of these Predictions *ocular Demonstrations* to those then alive, that Jesus Christ was, of God? **A.** Yes; for none but God, or Persons inspired and

Spirit indited both; and that the Bible presents us with a Prophetick Scheme of Providence from the Beginning to the End of Time.

2. That these Predictions were so far from having any Probability upon which they cou'd rationally be groundd; that they were accomplished against and in contradiction to all human Probability. Was it likely he shou'd ever die, who cou'd raise others from the Dead?—That he shou'd ever be seiz'd and bound, who cou'd command Seas and bind up the Winds?—That he shou'd be betrayed by a Friend, who had so many Enemies?—That he who was Keeper of the Bag shou'd accept so poor a Bribe?—That the Price of Blood shou'd be employ'd in an Act of Mercy?—That he shou'd die on a Cross, whom the People were so forward to stone?—That he shou'd die amongst Thieves, who had done so much good?—That he shou'd hold his Peace, who suffered so wrongfully?—That unjust and rapacious Soldiers shou'd be so equitable as to cast Lots for their Prize?—That Christ shou'd be crucified against the *Jewish* Law; and yet have no Bone broke, and be buried against the *Roman* Custom?—That he whom all forsook at his Death, and who died as a Criminal, shou'd be buried by Persons of Wealth and honourable Character?—That twelve mean Men shou'd attempt to convert the World?—That the Kingdom of Christ shou'd be founded in his Death, and shou'd spread thro' all Ages, when it seem'd utterly improbable the Apostles of Christ shou'd make one Convert? &c.

3. That since these Prophecies gave the Apostles as much Ground to expect Persecutions and a violent Death, as Jesus Christ himself; there is no doubt of their Faithfulness in recording them; as their being exactly fulfilled proved them to be Divine.

See *Allix's Reflect.* V. II. Ch. 11.
Kidder's Demonstrat. P. I. Ch. 10.
 S 3. commissioned

commissioned by him cou'd infallibly foresee and foretel these Events; and cause them to correspond to the Predictions.

Q. Are not some of these Events and the Effects of them permanent and visible unto this Day? A. Yes; for instance, the Ruin of *Jerusalem*; the Dispersion and distinct Subsistence of the *Jews*; the desolate State of *Judea*; the Spread of the Gospel; the Rise, Growth and Power of Antichrist; the Beginning of *Babylon's Fall*.

Q. Is not a constant Accomplishment of old and new Testament Prophecies, in a Chain of Providences, as clear and strong a Proof as can be, that God is the Author of the Bible and of the Christian Revelation? A. Yes.

Q. And is not the Testimony of the Apostles, and other writers, and the Testimony of every Age, that some of the scripture Predictions are accomplished, sufficient Ground to expect they will all have a full Accomplishment? A. Yes.

Q. And will not the Evidence for the divine Mission of Jesus Christ, and the divine Original of Christianity be hereby gathering Strength in every Age? A. Yes.

Q. Can this Evidence then ever grow weak much less be reduced to nothing? A. No.

The Fifth Branch of Proof.

Q. What is the fifth Proposition in order to prove the divine Original of Christianity?

That vast Numbers in the Apostles Days, and in every following Age, have not only imbraced Christianity, but have died for Christ, and shed their Blood in the Cause of Christian Truth; many of whom were Men of Learning Prudence and Judgment.

Q. Is *Success alone* a Proof of a good Cause?
A. No.

Q. Why then is the *Success of the Gospel* a good and strong Proof of its divine Original, and that the Hand of God was with the first Preachers? A. Because it had no human, worldly Advantages, and many visible Disadvantages; for all the World was against it; therefore it could not have prevailed and prospered unless God had been with it.

Q. What was the *first* great Disadvantage attending the preaching of the Gospel, which must for ever have hindered its Success, unless the God of Heaven had owned it? A. That the Author of it was a Man, a crucified, a dead Man; And the first Preachers of it had no human Qualifications fit for so grand an Undertaking *.

Q. If

* No Design was ever laid so grand and extensive as that laid by JESUS CHRIST, of a Kingdom which should spread over the World, and last for ever. But could a poor despised Man take one successful Step in an Enterprize so vast, unless God was with him! But was not God with him, when after his Death he bestowed such Armour as no King ever bestowed; issued out such Force as no Powers could withstand, and produced such Changes as amazed the whole World?

Q. If then the Gospel of a crucified Prophet succeeded in such Hands, must not Christ be something above Man; and his Apostles have Abilities and Powers from God himself?

A. Yes.

Q. What was the *second* great Disadvantage attending the preaching of the Gospel? A. That it had all the Religions, the Prejudices, the Passions, the Lusts and wicked Practises of the World to combat.

Q. Cou'd these be overcome, unless the Power and Spirit of God had accompanied the Apostles? A. No*.

Q. What

The Apostles were neither Politicians, Scholars nor Captains; and had no visible Abilities, no human Qualifications fitting them to contend with the *Wisdom* of the *Greeks*, the *Power* of the *Romans*, the *Malice* of the *Jews*, the *Rudeness* of the *Barbarians*; and were as unlike to beat down the established Religions of the World, as Children to storm a Garrison: If then they prospered, and every where made Converts to Christ, God was certainly with them.

* How unlikely were the great *Commands* of the Gospel to take with an idolatrous and debauched World; when it requires them to deny all Ungodliness, to banish their evil Thoughts, to conquer their fleshly Lusts; to govern their Desires, their Eyes and Tongues; to undervalue all worldly Grandeur; and to forsake Father and Mother, Brother and Child, yea, our worldly All, for Christ; to forgive Injuries, and to do good to Enemies! How unlike to succeed was the Gospel, which allows of no false Religion; but will have all Idolatry at once forsaken! *Greeks* must leave their Robberies; *Romans* give up their Conquests; Adulterers must become Chast, and Orators become Fools, in order to gain true Wisdom.

Q. What was the *third* great Disadvantage attending the preaching of the Gospel? **A.** That it offered Men no worldly Preferments, Prosperities and Pleasures; but only Spiritual, unseen and distant ones: and that it foretells Disgrace, Persecution, Imprisonment, Death to such as cordially imbrace it.

Q. If the Gospel had no worldly Honours or Riches on its Side; and all worldly Losses and Terrors against it; cou'd any thing succeed it, but the Hand of Heaven? **A.** No *.

The Apostles might as well have attempted to remove the Mountains, and shake the Pillars of the Earth, as to effect these Changes in the moral World, unless God had been with them.

Those who imbraced Christianity were not void of all Religious Principles; much less had Minds prepared for its Reception; but they were filled with Notions and Customs repugnant to the Institutions of Christ: They were also subject to a thousand Ills upon imbracing it; and yet might easily have escaped those Evils, by only denying Christ, or offering a little Incense upon the Altar; yet Christianity prevailed against all these Impediments and Obstructions.

Grot. L. 2. S. 23:

* Had the Gospel offered *Riches*, a Croud of covetous Worldlings wou'd have imbraced it: Had it offered *Pleasures*, the whole Herd of Epicures wou'd have been Disciples: Had *Court-Preferments* been Gospel Rewards, a Crew of Ambitious Mortals wou'd have declared for Christ. But no Rhetorick, except inspired from above, cou'd perswade Men to root out all those sensual Desires, and sacrifice all worldly hopes for the sake of a Heavenly Inheritance.

The Dangers and Perils attending the imbracing of the Gospel render'd its Success still more improbable; yet it prospered; Rods, Axes, Wheels, Racks, Chains, Fires cou'd not stop it: The Rich became poor, the Honourable lie low for Christ and the Gospel's sake. Surely God was with it.

Q. What

Q. What was a *fourth* great Disadvantage attending the preaching of the Gospel? A. That the Preachers of it were not qualified with human Eloquence, to *perswade* Men by mere Excellency of Speech; nor were they intrusted with Arms and military Force, to terrify Men into Professions of Obedience*.

Q. Cou'd any thing then but the Spirit of the Almighty give them such amazing Success at their first Appearance? A. No.

Q. As vast Numbers imbraced Christianity; so have many in every Age shed their Blood for the sake of Christ? A. Yes.

Q. Is not this the highest and last Evidence Men can possibly give of Sincerity, and that they are fully perswaded of the Truth and Goodness of the Cause in which they died? A. Yes †.

Q. Will

* The Apostles were Men plain, poor, obscure; Men not used to speak in Senates, Councils, and the Audiences of Princes; yet Councils are amazed, Princes confounded, and Judges tremble before 'em. Thus the Walls of *Jericho* fell by a Shout. Who gave them this Courage and Success? The Disciples were Servants to the Prince of Peace, they had no Chariots or Horses, no Swords or Spears, no great Prince or Generals on their Side. They were girded with no other Armour than Truth, Righteousness, Faith and Hope.—They had no Means by which to force the Gospel on the World every Convert was a Volunteer. To what then must the Gospel's Victory, and its Preachers Success be ascribed, but to the Arm of the Almighty, qualifying and prospering the Ministers of his Son.

See *Kiddie P. I. chap. 9*

† Wou'd the Apostles themselves ever have imbraced *Christ's Doctrine*, have conformed to its Precepts, have y

Q. Will dying for a Cause prove it true and ~~is~~? **A.** No; but it proveth the Sincerity of those who profess it, or their Perswasion of its Truth.

Q. Have not some Enthusiasts died in defence of Error? **A.** Yes; but they have believed it to be Truth.

negated his Religion, by all which they got Nothing, but lost every thing, even Life it self, if they had not seen his Miracles while alive, and seen him after his Resurrection from the Dead? Wou'd *Stephen*, a Man of so much Sense and Spirit, have been a Martyr for Christ? Wou'd *Paul*, a learned, zealous Jew, ever have imbraced Christianity, and have suffered Bonds and Imprisonment, Torments and Death? Wou'd these, and the other Apostles ever have thrown away their Lives, and have faced Death in the Cause of Christ, if Christ had not given full Proof of his divine Mission; and they had not seen him after his Resurrection?

Suppose a hundred intelligent, sober Men affirmed they saw a Mountain cleave, or a River dried up in a moment, and an Army pass thro'; wou'd not this be sufficient Evidence of the Fact? But if no such thing happened, wou'd sober Men affirm they saw it; and wou'd they die to confirm a Falshood; and a Falshood they cou'd get nothing by? Can we then imagine, that the Apostles, and Multitudes more, wou'd affirm they saw such a Person as Jesus Christ, saw him open blind Eyes, and deaf Ears, cure the Lame, and raise the Dead with a Word; that they saw him die on a Cross, saw him alive after his Death, heard him Preach, and saw him ascend into Heaven, if they never saw any of these Things? Had these been Falsties, had Christ never risen from the Dead, it is as certain as any thing can be, that some or other, rather than die, wou'd have confessed the Fraud.

The *Ascension of Christ* is not an incredible Fact; for the most improved Heathens deified their Emperors by an *Apostasy*, or *Canonization*, and worshipped them.

Jurieu's Crit. Hist.
Q. Tho'

Q. Tho' now and then a Man may be found who will die in defence of *Errors*, believed to be *Truths*; yet was it ever known, Multitudes of wise and sober Men have to attest the *Truth of Facts*, which knew never happened; or of which had no sufficient Evidence? A. No.

Q. If then Multitudes have shed Blood in Attestation of the *Truth of Christianity*, must they not have full Evidence those *Facts* on which Christianity depends? A. Yes *.

Q. Cou'd any Cause, but clear and convincing Proof be equal to such an Effect? A. No.

Q. And can any Effect be produced without a Cause equal or proportional to it? No; therefore nothing short of the Evidence

* The chief Evidence of the *Facts* on which the Christian Religion depends, as to *Us*, is the *many of our Saviour's Followers*. To make which a sufficient Evidence, it is only required 1 That it be certain the Apostles cou'd not be *imposed on themselves*. They saw, and saw. 1 *John* i. 1. 2. That it be certain, they had, nor cou'd have any Design of *imposing upon* us, which appears (1) from the Nature of their Works; wrought Miracles; lived according to their Doctrine; in the Cause (2) from their Character; they were plain innocent Men; got nothing by Christianity; were wonderfully succeeded: 3. That it be certain, their Testimony is conveyed down to us, unto this Day. Now, it was a *ten Testimony*; it was wrote by themselves; it was translated, dispersed, quoted, owned as genuine, and is capable of any considerable Corruption. Inspiration of *their Testimony* and Writings a peculiar Authority.

of the Eye-sight cou'd cause hundreds of sensible Men to affirm to the last, and die affirming, that they saw Christ after his Resurrection, heard the Apostles preach in various Languages, and saw them do many wonderful Works in Christ's Name †.

Q. Now if the first Christians had Demonstration of the Truth of Christ's Mission from God; is not *their Testimony*, sealed by their Blood, Ground of *our* Faith, together with other concurring Evidences? A. Yes; for they wou'd not have thrown away their Lives in defence of an unproved Religion. They wou'd not have run into Fires on Earth, and into the Fire of Hell too, only to uphold the Credit of a Lie, which cou'd never be of any Advantage to them.

The Sixth Branch of Proof.

Q. What is the *sixth* Proposition in order to prove the divine Original of Christianity?

A. That the New Testament contains the Revelation God made by Jesus Christ; and the History of the great Things he did to prove his divine Mission: That it is an au-

† All Sorts of Witnesses attest Christ's divine Mission; The *Shepherds*, too simple to deceive; the *Magi*, too learned to be deceived; *Angels*, in the Air, to *Mary*, *Joseph*, *Elizabeth*, *Simeon* and *Anna*, in his Infancy; *John Baptist*, when at Age; the *Spirit*, resting on him; a *Voice* from Heaven, speaking to him.

Burnet, de fide.

T

hentick,

thentick, credible History, and was writ by Men who had extraordinary Assistance (Inspiration) from God *.

Q. Has not the New Testament all the Marks of Genuineness, and all the Circumstances of Credibility, which any other History in the World has? A. Yes †.

Q. W

* *Matthew and John* were Eye-witnesses of the Life of Christ: *Mark and Luke*, Disciples of the Apostles, wrote their Gospels, that it might appear there was no Difference between what the Apostles wrote, and what they preached, *vis-a-voce*. Dupin's Hist. Can. N. T. p. 198.

Authentick is a Law Term, implying a certain Deed or Instrument Justifiable in Law, and invested with a public Authority. id. p. 198.

Objection. If Christ has declared no Books canonical, who had Authority to do it? *Answer*. Every Man who believes these Books do contain a genuine Account of the Gospel of Christ, and that this Gospel is a Revelation from God.

Chandler's Vindicat. p. 1

† The Christian Religion is contained in the New Testament; This consists of *Historical* and *Letters*. Now 1. *History* is the worst thing in the World to found a new Religion upon. 2. Letters are not easily counterfeited, are the truest Transcript of the Author's Mind.

As to the Christian Bible in general, Observe,

1. The Books were not wrote by one Person, at one Time, in one Place; therefore not likely to be a Contrivance of Men.

2. Jesus wrote no Part of his own Bible. If there be Mistakes in it, they are none of his. Pens are no Materials.

3. It supposes Christianity already kindled in the World.

4. The Apostles began to preach where the Things were done, on which their Religion stands.

Characters of the Founder of Christianity, and his Disciples, in 23 Articles.

Q. What are these Marks and Characters?

A. 1. It was wrote by many Hands, who all agree in the main Facts. 2. It was wrote by Men of a fair Reputation; there is no Appearance of Dishonesty in them. 3. It was wrote in a plain, natural, undisguised Manner. 4. It was wrote by Eye and Ear-witnesses. 5. It was wrote soon after the Facts were done. 6. It was generally received, as soon as wrote.

T 2

7. It

1. Jesus was disingag'd from the Pleasures and Gains of this World. 2. He provided no Successor; therefore worldly Dominion was not his Aim. 3. His Institution visibly tended to the good of others, not of himself. 4. His Accomplishes were Men of no Parts or Learning, Interest, Wealth or Power; nor qualified for Intrigues or Conquests. 5. He educates his School in Self-denial, gives them no worldly Views; allows them to tell abroad all they knew; charges them to make no bodily Provision, when they set out; and takes down all their aspiring Thoughts. 6. He foretells them, they wou'd all desert him. 7. When one turns Apostate, he makes no Discoveries. 8. After their Master's Death, they grow active, bold and firm in his Cause. 9. The Spirit and Fractise inspired by the Christian Institution is all divine. 10. Severity was exercised on *Ananias*. Must little Liars be punished, while the great Liars and Impostors (if the Apostles were such) escape! 11. Christ's Ambassadors labour far and travel hard. 12. They admit many into their Design and Work. 13. They disagree, yet unite in the main Design. 14. They reprove their Seminaries, the Churches; and are severe upon the Corrupters of the Christian Institution: which is not the way of Impostors. 15. Partial Revolters return, as *Mark*, *Demas*. 16. The Doctrines are too many to be agreed on without Truth; as concerning God, Christ, the World: As also too strange. 17. The original Confederates are too holy to unite in a Lie; and a great *Lovers of Mankind* to deceive them by Forgeries. 18. They

7. It was early translated into various Languages; which both shews its Worth, and secured it from material or contrived Corruption. 8. It has been as carefully kept, and transmitted from one Age to another, as the Writings by which Estates are convey'd. 9. It has been quoted by several Writers in every Age since it was wrote; which proves it was written early, and was esteemed a divine Book.

18. They preached up the best Principles of universal Righteousness; as Conscience, God's Purity, Sincerity, a new Man, Judgment to come. 19. They cut off the Springs of Imposture; namely, Mens irregular Appetites and Passions. 20. They allow no ill Methods to propagate the Christian Institution. 21. They frequently appeal to their Miracles, as to a Testimony from Heaven. 22. They neither did, nor could promote any secular Advantages; but cut themselves off from all present Supports; and from all hope of future Bliss, in Case they had propagated a Lie. 23. They ave the Testimony of Conscience; look Man in the Face without fear; and meet Death with Joy. And this, if any thing is a Trial of Skill.

Fools or Enthusiasts were not the Authors of the Christian Institution; for it appears that the Authors understood, 1. Languages. 2. The State of the World. 3. The Nature of Man. 5. Ethicks, or the noble Principles of Morality.

Reinolds's 3d Let. to the Deists

Had we no new Testament, we might be satisfied of the Truth of the Substance of the Christian Religion. 1. By a Succession of Ministers, whose Interest it is to keep Christ's Laws; as it is of Lawyers to keep the Laws of the Land. 2. By the Successive Teaching of Parents. 3. By keeping up of Lord's-Day Assemblies. 4. By the Celebration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. 5. By the Lord's-Prayer, Creed and Commandments.

See Baxter, Reasons for the Christ. Religion.
his safe Relig. 186, 223, 209, &c.

Q. If the History of Christ's Life, Miracles, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, giving the Holy Ghost, &c. be a true History, then was not Jesus Christ sent from God? **A.** Yes.

Q. And if Christ was from God, what Judgment ought we to make of the Doctrines and Precepts recorded in the new Testament? **A.** That they are a Canon or Rule from God to Christians, what to believe, how to live, and what to hope for.

Q. And if the Apostles preached and wrote by the Assistance of an Extraordinary Illumination, and under the Guidance of an unerring Spirit, what Judgment ought we to make of their Sermons and Writings? **A.** That they also are a Part of the Canon or Rule to Christians.

Q. Cou'd they deliver Prophecies to be fulfilled in future Ages; agree in new Doctrines, deliver unerring Rules, &c. without the Guidance and Influence of an infallible Spirit? **A.** No.

Q. What rendered it highly necessary the Apostles shou'd have infallible Guidance both in Preaching and Writing? **A.** That they had many Doctrines to deliver not proper to be taught till after the Death and Resurrection of Christ; and that they were to preach and write for future Ages, upon the most Important Subjects.

Q. Did Christ promise his Apostles the Assistance of his Spirit? **A.** Yes.

Q. To what Purposes did he make this Promise to them of the Holy Spirit? A. 1. To bring all Things (necessary to the Ends of their Preaching and Writing) to their Remembrance. 2. To lead them into all Truth, as far as needful to the same Ends*.

* For the various Kinds and Degrees of Inspiration. See *Smith's select Discourses*.

Two Particulars are requisite to Inspiration, (in the most general Sense of the Word) 1. That the Will be rightly inclined; so that the Writer wou'd not tell a Lie, or advance a Falshood. 2. That his Understanding be clear, so that he cannot be mistaken, in taking a Falshood for a Truth.

Dupin's Hist. Can. p. 55.

In *Wisdom* the sacred Books of the new Testament surpass those of the wisest *Pagans*; yet were they compos'd by simple, unlearned Men; therefore they were inspired. Every thing in them is true, great, sublime.

Dupin, p. 13.

It is absurd to suppose, 1. That Christ shou'd give a Commission to preach the Gospel, and not instruct the Apostles how to discharge it. 2. That Persons acting under the Guidance of the Holy Ghost shou'd not act faithfully. 3. That while Christ was confirming their Doctrine by Miracles, he left them liable to Error. If these are all absurd and false, then the Apostles Doctrine is a *Rule of Faith and Life* to us.

That the Apostles preached under the Conduct of the Holy Spirit. See *John* 14. 16, 17. 26. *chap.* 15. 26. *chap.* 16. 13. *Eph.* 3. 5. *1 Cor.* 2. 7, 10, 16. *2 Cor.* 13. 1. *1 Thess.* 4. 8, 15. *1 Pet.* 1. 12. *2 Pet.* 3. 15. They acted as Ministers of God; *Rom.* 1. 5. *chap.* 15. 16. *1 Cor.* 4. 1. *2 Cor.* 5. 18. *Col.* 1. 25. *1 Tim.* 2. 5. Their Doctrines were the Commandments of God. *Rom.* 15. 16. *1 Cor.* 14. 37. *2 Cor.* 2. 12. *chap.* 11. 7. *1 Thess.* 22. 8, 9, 13. *1 Tim.* 1. 11.

Bp. of London's 3d. Past. Let.

Q. 1

Q If the new Testament hath God for its prime Author, is not this enough to say for our Religion? A. Yes*.

2. How

* A *Fool* cou'd not; a *wise Man* wou'd not draw up so elaborate a Book, and father it on God. He must know, that he cou'd have no Reward for such an impious Forgery: Nor cou'd he ever stand Persecution in its Defence. Again, *One Man* cou'd not be equal to such a Design, as composing, perfecting, propagating such a Book: for it is like the materials of *China-Dishes*, which are begun by the Father, continued by the Son, finished by the Grandson. *Many* cou'd never agree in so unprofitable a Work. Was it a mere human Contrivance, some wou'd have revealed the Deceit.

Henry on the Bible, Vol. I. Pref.

The Bible, being the Work of several Ages, cou'd not possibly be a human Contrivance. It is either the *best* or *worst* Book in the World. It is visibly not a *bad Book*, much less the worst; but it wou'd be so, if it was forged in God's Name. Therefore it is the best.

The *Jews* have an Ordinance very famous in their *Gerama*, by which each *Jew* is obliged to transcribe one Copy of the Law with his own Hands. This shews the vast Respect they pay to the sacred Books; and is enough to put to Shame the Indifference of Christians.

Dupin, p. 225.

To persuade Men to believe the Scriptures, I only offer this to their Consideration. If there be a God, whose Providence governs the World, and, all the Creatures in it, is it not reasonable to think that he hath a particular Care of Men, the noblest Part of this visible World? And seeing he hath made them capable of eternal Happiness, and sufficiently revealed to them the Way to it, and the Terms and Conditions of it? But let any Man produce any Book in the World, which pretends to be from God, and to do this; which for the Matter of it is so worthy of God, the *Doctrines* whereof are so useful, and the Precepts so reasonable, and the Arguments so powerful; the Truth of all which was confirmed

confirmed by so many great and unquestionable the Relation of which has been transmitted to Publick and authentick Records, written by those Eye and Ear-witnesses of what they wrote, and Suspicion of any worldly Interest or Design: Let duce a Book like to this, in all these Respects; a over and besides, hath, by the Power and Reach of the Doctrines contained in it, so miraculously in the World, by weak and inconsiderable Means, fition to all the Wit and Power of the World, and Discouragements as no other Religion was ever assau let any Man bring forth such a Book, and he shall Leave to believe it as soon as the Bible. But if the such, as I am well assured there is not, then ever thinks God hath revealed himself to Men, ought to entertain the Doctrine of the holy Scriptures, ed by God.

Guardian. No. 75. (from an eminent

The Account given by the sacred Writers of *Prophetic Things* is confirmed by other antient Writers of *Notes*: There is nothing in them unsuitable to the

Q. How do you prove that it is not the *Work of Devils and bad Men?* A. No evil Beings cou'd be the Father of so wise and holy an Off-spring. The new Testament every where represents the Devil and wicked Men under the most odious Characters; but they wou'd never give themselves an ill Cha-

rrung up, or by some Phrase not then in Use. And this is next to impossible in a Work of a considerable Length, consisting of several Pieces, with a great Variety of Historical facts, Representations of Characters, Principles and Customs of several Nations and distant Countries, of Persons of all Ranks, of many Interests and Parties; and done by eight several Persons, most of them unlearned, and without any Appearance of Concert.

II. "If the Books of the New Testament were writ by Persons who lived before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; that is, if they were writ at the Time in which they are said to be writ, the Things related in them are true." For they had not been Matter of Fact, they wou'd not have been credited,—but been treated as Lies and Forgeries. Men wou'd never have changed their Religion upon the Credit of em.

III. "If the History of the new Testament be credible, the Christian Religion is true." For if the Things related be done by Jesus and his Followers, by virtue of Powers riv'd from him, do not prove a Person to come from God, nothing can. And in all Circumstances Jesus answered the description of the great Person promised in the old Testament.

IV. "From the Agreement of the Writers of the New Testament with other antient Writers, we are not only assured that these Books are genuine; but also that they come down to us pure and uncorrupted, without any considerable Interpolation or Alteration."

This may be reckoned an Argument that the Generality of Christians have had a high Veneration for these Books; else, that the several Sects amongst them have had an Eye

Character. In every Page it condemns Sin, and threatens those who commit it: It foretells the Ruin of the Devil and wicked Men. Their Enmity against the Bible has always appeared; but they wou'd not hate their own Off-spring. Evil Spirits wou'd never write so good a Book; these are not the Words of him who hath a Devil. Nor wou'd a wise and good God suffer them to preach such Doctrine and confirm it by Miracles.

2. How do you prove that *Angels and good Men* were not the Inventers and Authors of the new Testament? A. It does not pre-

Eye upon each other, that no Alterations might be made in those Writings to which they all have appealed. It is also an Argument that the divine Providence has all along watched over and guarded these best of Books (a very fit Object of especial Care) which contain the best of Principles, were apparently writ with the best Views, and have in them inimitable Characters of Truth and Simplicity.

Lardin, Credib. V. II. Conclus.

These Books having been received for many Ages, as the Writings of the Men whose Names they bear; they who do impugn their Authority must *prove* the Forgery.

As to the Books of the New Testament for some time doubted of, no Reason can be assigned why Men shou'd counterfeit them, since Nothing is contained in them which is not expressed in other unquestion'd Books. And who, without any Motive, wou'd be guilty of such a Forgery! for such as deceive, do it either from *Ignorance* or a *wicked Heart*; neither of which are chargeable on the Writers of the New Testament. Nor wou'd God suffer such as desire to worship him aright, to be necessarily deceived by false Books. To say the Books are corrupted, and to bring no Proof, is not *Testimony*, but only Reproach.

See *Grot. de Verit. L. 3. S. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 15.*
tend

end to come from *Angels*; and if it did come from them, we might depend upon it. As to *good Men*, tho' they own themselves to be the Writers of it, they ascribe it to God as the principal Author. Now they wou'd lose their Character, and be most wicked Men, if they fathered a Book on God, of which he was not the Author. Good Men wou'd never do so ill a Thing as invent and propagate a Lie, counterfeit God's Seal, and set it to a Patent of their own framing.

Q. Must not God then be the Author of it? A. Yes.

Q. If the *new Testament* be of God, must not the *old Testament* be also from God? A. Yes.

Q. Why? A. Because the Books of *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and the *Prophets* are quoted as divine in the new Testament. They are said to be written by Inspiration of God.—That holy Men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and that God, at various Times, and diverse Manners, spoke unto his Fathers by the Prophets.

Q. Does not our Faith then, as Christians, stand upon an immovable Foundation; and may we not have Joy in Believing? A. Yes.

S E C T. VIII,

Particular Excellencies of the Christian Religion, proving it, by its Essence and internal Characters to be divine

Q. **T**O how many Sorts or Heads may the Excellencies of the Christian Religion be reduced? **A.** To four; namely those relating to its *Author, Nature, Territory, General Properties.*

I. As to its **AUTHOR.**

Q. What Excellencies belonged to Christ, the Author of the Christian Religion? **A.** He appeared, by his Temper, Life and Works, to possess, in an eminent Degree, Spirit of Power, Wisdom and Love; and to bear divine Characters.

Q. How does it appear that he had Spirit of Power? **A.** By his mighty Works for he exercised an uncontrolled Dominion over Men and Demons; over Winds and Earth and Air, Diseases and Death. *viii. 26. Chap. iv. 23. Mark i. 34. 16 v. 8.*

Q. How does it appear he had the Spirit of Wisdom?

* Tho' some of these Characters are mentioned yet it may not perhaps be unacceptable to see 'em all in one View. See Sect. VI.

A. 1. By the wise Answers he gave his
versaries concerning his Authority, paying
tribute, the Resurrection, Divorces; and by
conferring with the Doctors at twelve
years of Age. *Mat.* 21. 23. *ch.* 22. 16, 23, &c.

2. By that Scheme of Truth or Doctrine he
gave the World: Which Scheme (1) giveth
a grand Idea of God, and gloriously de-
scribes him in majestick and indearing Charac-

ter. *John* 4. 24. *Rev.* 4. 8. *Jam.* 1. 17. *Acts*

17. *Heb.* 12. 9. *chap.* 4. 13. *1 Tim.* 1. 17. *ch.*

5. *Mat.* 6. 9. (2) Represents Man as a
rational Being, beloved of God, and capable of
immortality. *1 Tim.* 1. 16. *2 Tim.* 1. 9. *Mat.*

26. (3) opens the Dependence of the
whole World, and of every Creature on God.

1. 4. 10. ch. 10. 6. *Acts* 17. 24. (4) shew-

us our great and numerous Engagements
to God. *Acts* 4. 24. *ch.* 17. 24. *Mat.* 6. 26.

1. 4. 20. 2 Cor. 5. 18. (5) describes the
guilt and Deformity of Sin. *1 John* 3. 4-8.

1. 2. 8. ch. 6. 23. (6) lays before us the

wonderful Method of Salvation. *John* 3. 16.

1. 3. 9. Heb. 2. 14. *ch.* 9. 14. *1 John* 3. 8.

reconciles the Attributes of God in the
Method of our Salvation. *Rom.* 3. 24. *ch.* 5. 21.

Excellently teaches us all our Duty to God,
each other, and to our selves; or divine,

Neither the greek Philosophers, nor even *Moses*, much
Mahomet were free from Crimes, as *Jesus Christ* was:
one Mark of Imposture appears in his Religion.

See *Prideaux's Let. to the Deists.*
U social

20. 10. (11) represents and offers the
Conclusion of this World. *Mat.* 25. 31-
20. 11. (12) represents and offers the
Blessedness. *Rev.* 21. 1-6.

Q. How does it appear Jesus Christ is
Spirit of LOVE? A. His *Love to God* a
in his requiring Men to love him. *Mat.*
in his preaching God's Love to Men. 9
16. *Mat.* 4. 24. in his suffering for God
15. 18. in his conversing with God. *L*
12. in his Obedience to God. *John* 10.
14. 31. *ch.* 18. 11.

His *Love to Man* appears, in his
Love to one another the second great
mandment. *Mat.* 22. 39. in doing good to
Acts 16. 38. *Mat.* 4. 23. *ch.* 14. 14. in
ing to them the way of Salvation. *Mark*
ch. 4. 1. in requiring Love even to En

II. As to its NATURE.

Q. What Excellencies belong to the Nature of the Christian Religion, which shew it to be worthy of God?

A. It appears in all its Branches suitable to the Nature and Perfections of God, the Office of a Redeemer, the Case of a sinful World, the Case of a redeemed World.

Q. How does the Christian Religion appear highly suitable to the Nature and Perfections of God?

A. 1. It calls us to study and admire the boundless Nature, Attributes and Blessedness of God, as the chief Imployment of our Lives. *John* 17. 3. 2. It affirms God to be the principal Author and Cause of all Worlds, and of all Excellencies in them. *Acts* 4. 24. *ch.* 17. 24. *Rev.* 4. 11. *ch.* 10. 6. 3. It proclaims God and his Glory to be the noblest and highest End of all Things. *Rev.* 4. 11. *Eph.* 1. 11. *Rom.* 11. 36. *1 Cor.* 10. 31. *1 Pet.* 4. 11. 4. It Summons us to study and applaud the Love and Grace of God as the great Fountain of our Redemption. *1 John* 4. 9, 10. 5. It orders us to study and observe the Will of God as the great Law and Rule of our Hearts and Lives. *James* 2. 10. 6. It teaches us to place our Hope and Joy in the Favour of God, in beholding his Face, and dwelling in his Presence and Glory. *1 Thess.* 5. 17. *Rev.* 33. *ch.* 22. 3.

Q. How does the Christian Religion appear highly suitable to the *Office of a Redeemer*?

A. 1. It giveth us a Sight of God in Person of the Redeemer. *2 Cor. 4. 6.*

2. It recommendeth Duty and Holiness in the strict Obedience of the Redeemer, who herein our Example. *Heb. 5. 8. John 15.*

3. It loudly warneth us against Sin, by shewing us what it deserves, in the Sorrows and agonies of a Redeemer. *Luke 22. 44. Rom.*

4. It teacheth us the Emptiness and End of the World, by the Redeemer's Contempt of it and Conquest over it. *John 16. 33.*

4. 8. 5. It teacheth us to master the Flesh by the Redeemer's Poverty and Self-denial even to the Death. *2 Cor. 8. 9. Phil. 2.*

6. It teacheth us the Temptations and Malice of the Powers of Darkness, by the Redeemer's Conflict with them, and Conquest over them. *Luke 4. 1—13.* 7. It sheweth the Reward and Crown God has for his faithful Servants, in the Joys and Glories to which the Redeemer is gone. *John 12. 26. ch. 1.*

Q. How does the Christian Religion appear highly suitable to the Case of a *sinful, guilty World*?

A. 1. As it discovers our sinful State, and the Rise and Derivation of it to all the World. *Rom. 5. 12. ch. 3. 9. Eph. 2. 3.* 2. It tends to convince the World of Sin and Mischief, and of the Righteousness of God in its deserved Condemnation. *Rom. 3. 19—21.*

The Christian Catechism. 233

lays the Beginning of Religion in a deep Humiliation, and such a Repentance as leads the Heart from Sin to God. *Mat.* 3. 1. *ch.* 4. 7. *Acts* 3. 19. *John* 4. 9. *Rom.* 5. 7, 8. *ch.* 4. 4. It prevents Despair in a guilty world, by the Help which is prepared; namely, the Redemption and Forgiveness provided for the Chief of Sinners. *Rom.* 3. 24. *ch.* 5. 16. *1 Cor.* 1. 11. *1 Tim.* 1. 15. 5. It cuts off all Ground of Security and Pretumption, by fully declaring, "That without Repentance and Holiness there shall be no Salvation. *Acts* 3. 19. *1 Thess.* 1. 8. *Heb.* 12. 14. 6. It calls the World to a continual War against Sin and Corruption within, and against all the Snares and Temptations round about. *1 Cor.* 9. 24. 7. It calls its Professors to expect Hatred and Persecution for Religion from an ungodly, malicious world. *Mat.* 10. 34. 8. It shews Men their Remedy and Cure for all their Sin and Sorrow, in the Love and Grace of God by Jesus Christ. *Heb.* 12. 2.

Q. How is the Christian Religion suited to the Case of a redeemed World?

A. 1. As it eminently illustrates the Holiness and Righteousness of God; and thereby lets us see the Expediency, Use, and Office of a Mediator. *Rom.* 1. 17. *ch.* 3. 25. *1 John* 2. 1. 2. It represents all our Goodness and Obedience as unable to bear God's strict Trial; which leads us to esteem a great Medi-

ator, thro' whom we may hope for Acceptance. *Rom.* 2. 10. *Eph.* 1. 6. 3. It encourageth us to come to God, not relying on Sovereign absolute Mercy; but on God as reconciled, reconciling the World to himself. *Rom.* 5. 1. *Eph.* 2. 13. 4. It teaches true Christians amidst their Sins and Sorrows, to live in Belief of and Dependence upon the Redeemer, and constant Intercession with God in Heaven. *Rom.* 8. 34. *Heb.* 7. 25. 5. It challengeth that Love to God, Joy in him, and Thankfulness to him, which become a World redeemed from Sin and Death. *Rom.* 8. 2. *Eph.* 3. 1. *Jude* 24. 6. It teacheth us a Conversation worthy of Heaven, as becometh those who are deemed for that State and Company. *1 Cor.* 15. 58. *Col.* 3. 1. *Heb.* 12. 22.

7. It directs us to prepare for and look at Death with Faith and Joy, as a Departure to the Redeemer, and to the blessed Part of the redeemed World. *Phil.* 1. 23. *Acts* 7. 59. *Heb.* 12. 23.

III. As to its TENDENCY and INFLUENCE.

Q. What are the Excellencies of the Christian Religion with regard to its *Tendency* and *Influence*? A. Its Influence is excellent.

1. The Mind of Man. 2. Societies. 3. Preparation for Death.

Q. What Excellency and Influence hath the Christian Religion upon the Mind of Man?

A. 1. It tends to advance and improve the Understanding of Man, by calling him to

The Christian Catechism. 235

with the most excellent and heavenly Acts and Affairs. *Col.* 1. 9—16. *Rom.* 12. *Phil.* 3. 20. 1 *John* 1. 3. 2. It tends to love and exalt the Hearts and Spirits of , by setting them on God and Heaven, the most heavenly Injoyments. *Col.* 3. 1. 8.6. 1 *Pet.* 1. 3—8. 3. It purges and re- the whole Man; mortifying all Lusts, and ing to the most noble, masculine, and spi- l Offices, Duries, and Employments. *Eph.* , 22. *Rom.* 13. 13. 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. *cb.* 16. 3. propounds the most wise and excellent s for spending of Time, and for the Go- ment and Conduct of Life. *Eph.* 5. 15. *r.* 7. 29. 1 *Thess.* 4. 11. 2 *Thess.* 3. 12. 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. It offers the most excellent and no- Motives and Arguments to support and ce all our Service and Duty; taken from Love and Goodness of God in Creation Providence; especially in reconciling the old to himself by Jesus Christ. *Heb.* 12. 9. 3. 10. *Jam.* 1. 17. 1 *Pet.* 2. 3. 1 *Cor.* 6. 1 *Cor.* 5. 19. *Eph.* 4. 32. 6. It provides promises a most excellent, holy, wise, pow- , gracious Spirit for sanctifying Souls, and ing them to the Love of that Duty which requires. *Eph.* 1. 17. 2 *Cor.* 3. 3. *Heb.* 2. *Rom.* 8. 9, 13. 7. It proposeth the most e Rewards, and the most excellent Happi- Man's Nature is capable of. *John* 3. 17. 1 *Cor.* 15. 49. 1 *Thess.* 3. 13. chap. 4. 16. affords the best Arguments, Armor and
A.

Body, and ex-
cation and Hon-
Tb // 4. 3, 4. ...
able Religion; ...
blind, guilty ...
and giving the
Cor. 1. 24--30.
self-abasing Re-
Conceit and ...
on for Humili-
5. 3. *Rom.* 3. ...
it is the most ...
Contentment ...
Circumstances
6. 7. it is th-
all Honesty, ...
Transactions ...
is the most un-

fs, to Men, and to God, who commands it, *1st* 14. 13, 14. 11. it is the most ingenuous and thankful Religion; requiring all Gratitude, and grateful Acknowledgments to be paid to God, as the great Benefactor of the World; and to Men as the Conveyers of his Blessings. *1st* 3. 15. 2 *Cor.* 2. 12. 12. it is the most sweet and joyful Religion; teaching us to live in the pleasing Love of God, in the Tastes of his Love to us, and in the joyful Expectation of living with him in Glory. 1 *Thess.* 4. 17. *1st* 5. 1—11 *.

C H A P. VI.]

OBJECTIONS against Revelation in general; and against the Christian Revelation in particular briefly stated and answered.

Q. **W**Hich is the first Objection?
 A. That if Reason be a sufficient Guide to Religion, Virtue and Happiness, then Revelation must be needless: if Reason be not a sufficient Guide, how can we vindicate God in leaving many Nations, for many Ages, without such a Guide. If God has ordained Men for Happiness, is it con-

* See *Baxter's Reasons* for the Christian Relig. chap. 4. *Wald's Confirm. Cat. and Relig. of Jesus delineated.*

tient Moralists did) their Aim seems to be the *Gratification* of them. (2) That they did not wish that the noble Doctrine of *mortality* may be true; which the *gentile Philosophers* so greatly

(3) That they seem to despise *Light* which was offered, when the Antients owned their *ignorance*, and waited for a divine Truth.

(4) That they ridicule Things sacred, which the *Heathen Moralists* had a Veneration for. It is a certain Mark of a *degenerate Mind*, to depreciate Christianity, which is so evidently a good and divine Institution.

6. That if we desert *Jesus Christ*, and the *Prophets*, and go to *gentile Teachers* only, we shall find,— They were *ignorant* of many important Truths; as of the *Creation* of Things, and the *Nature of Worship*. They were *in the Dark* and uncertain as to *God*, as the *Immortality of the Soul*, and a *Future Judgment*. They *differed* about the *great* Articles; as the *Nature and Number of Gods*, and the *chief good*. They taught *Doctrines* which encouraged *Vice*; as *murder and Revenge*. Moreover, their *influence* was *inconsiderable*; for they had but *few*, and but *few* their *Scholars*, and but *few* of the *upper Rank*. The *Vulgar* wanted *Opportunity* to attend, and *Capacity* to *understand* their *Lectures*. Their *Worship* was made up of (not moral Instructions, but) *Rites*. They had no *Schemes* of *Reformation*.

They wanted Authority to command. The little Authority they had was diminished by endless Disputes amongst the Heads of their Sects; few of whom were Men of Virtue and holy Lives. See *Chap. V. Sect. 3. and 4.*

II. Q. Which is the second Objection?

A. That *Moses* seems not to have wrote the Books which bear his Name; in regard, there are a Variety of Passages in them which specify a Time long after his Death; as that Phrase, which often occurs, *unto this Day*: that Passage which speaks of the Kings of *Edom*, before there was any King in *Israel*; which must be wrote after there were Kings in *Israel*: The Account of *Moses's* Death. &c.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. 1. That *Moses* wrote Memoirs of the Transactions of his own Times is unquestionable; and appears from many Passages, as *Ex. 37. 27. Num. 33. 1, 2. Deut. 31. 24, 26. Jobn 1. 8. ch. 5. 46, 47.* *Moses* wrote probably on Rolls of Parchment, or Leaves, at distinct Times, and in the midst of full Business. (except the Book of *Genesis*) These were probably (according to Sir *Isaac Newton*) compiled into Volumes, or into their present Form by *Samuel*; and were revised by *Ezra*, with such Additions as might be necessary to explain several Parts for the present or succeeding Ages. The Priests and Levites, to whom these

these Papers were committed, might place some of them, or add marginal Notes which might creep into the Text. But Suppositions are no Bar to their being acknowledged as Books of *Moses*.

2. The whole Nation of the *Jews*, ther with the Writers of other Nations unanimously ascribe these Books to *Moses* their Author; which is as good Evidence as the Testimony of the *Romans*, that the *Books* ascribed to *Cæsar*, *Livy*, *Virgil*, *Julius* were wrote by them whose Names they *Josephus* ascribes them to *Moses*. In the Time of our Saviour, He, his Apostles and the whole Nation ascribed them to *Moses*. *Luke 24. 44.*

3. These Books have all the Marks of ancient genuine Writings; as Language and Customs then practised. They have been better kept than any other Books, more oftener transcribed and quoted. They have been kept with the utmost Veneration by the People, whose Interest it was to detect and disprove them, and who might easily have done it, if they were forged. But *nothing* of Imposture or Forgery belong to them. Their Contents are worthy of God, and above the Spirit, Majesty and Language of Men. They convey the most just Notions of God, of Providence, of moral Good and Evil. They are the Source of Light and Knowledge in all other Writings. They

A Volume of excellent Laws, which in particular forbid all Lying and Fraud. They are the Foundation of the *Jewish* civil and religious Polity; therefore they must know their Original. The Lord Jesus, who never spares their Crimes, does not once charge the *Jews* with either *forging* or *corrupting* the sacred Books; whence we may conclude, they were not guilty.

III. Q. Which is the third Objection?

A. That tho' *Moses* was a great Man in Science and Conduct, civil and military, and formed his Common-wealth with great Art and Address, as *Minos*, *Numa*, *Lycurgus*, &c. yet all might be done without divine Assistance. Heathen Princes and Legislators, in laying the Foundation of Kingdoms and Commonwealths, have pretended to Revelations from God, Oracles and Apparitions, only to establish a Reputation amongst the People, and gain Reverence to their Laws: And this perhaps, was the Case with *Moses*.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. 1. *Moses* acted in a Post above any thing in this World, and was superior in the Character he assumed to the most exalted earthly Monarchs; namely, that of the immediate *Minister of God*. He must have then proportionable Grounds to support and maintain such a Character. It is also plain, by his whole *History*, that he did not rise to his great Au-
thority

thority by any Schemes of Policy, or Success of Arms, or sudden Heats and Chances, which give Rise to popular Choices. Nor can any Account be given of his Authority but a divine Commission.

2. The *moral Character* of *Moses* is unstained and bright. That he wrote with a strict Regard to Truth, appears in that he does not spare his own Conduct where faulty. *Ex.* 3. and 4. *ch.* 20. 12. *Num.* 27. 14. He is so far from being partial to his Relations, that he made no Provision for his two Sons, *Gershom* and *Eleazer*, but left them in the State of common Priests. *1 Chron.* 23. 14. No such Instances of Disinterestedness and Resignation are to be found amongst the Princes of this World. He is also very free in recording the Crimes of his People, even of his nearest Relations, *Aaron* and *Miriam*. Such a Man would never pretend to a Commission from God, which he knew he had not.

3. *Moses* must certainly have been directed by an immediate Revelation from God; for would he, of his own Head, or upon any Principles of Politicks, have led the *Israelites* to the *Red-Sea*, when he had a nearer and safer March? Would he, upon any State-Maxims, have kept them in so many and so extream Dangers in the Wilderness forty Years, where were no Supplies but Miraculous ones? Would he, if directed by human Counsels only, have refused to enter *Canaan*,
where

when the People were all spirited up to Fight? Wou'd he, upon any Rules of human Government, or durst he, if not supported by God in it, have denounced their Fate, "to spend
" their Lives and die in the Wilderness, even
" all the Men of War, by whom only they
" cou'd hope to conquer *Canaan*; and that
" none, not one of them (except *Joshua* and
" *Caleb*) shou'd enter the Land they had so
" long hoped for? *Num.* 14. 28—32. Wou'd *Moses* have given those two extraordinary Laws, "of going up three times a Year to
" *Jerusalem*, and exposing their Borders to
" Invasions on every Side;" and "of leaving
" their Land untill'd every seventh Year, and
" attending at God's House, Men, Women,
" Servants, Children;" which must have
been fatal to them, without a miraculous Interposul? Wou'd *Moses* have published such Laws, if not ordered by God? Or, wou'd the People ever have submitted to them, unless convinced they were divine? *Ex.* 34. 23. *Lev.* 25. 2—7, 18, 22. *cb.* 26. 2—13. *Deut.* 31. 10—13. Does not their future Practice, and do not future Events fully vindicate both them and *Moses*?

To be more particular.

1. If the Facts recorded by *Moses* were real; if the Plagues came upon *Egypt*; if the Sea divided; if Manna fell for forty Years; if the Rocks opened under his Rod; if a Voice spoke from Heaven at Mount Sinai; if a Pillar of Cloud

Cloud and Fire guided them; if the Earth opened, and swallowed up the Rebels, at the Word of *Moses*; if *Aaron's* Rod blossomed, &c. then *Moses* acted by a Commission from God: Plainer and greater Proofs cou'd not be given.

2. These were real Facts; for *Moses* wrote the History of them at the Time when they are said to be done, to be laid up as a publick, national Register, to be read by and to the People, who were witnesses of them. *Ex.* 17. 14. *Deut.* 31. 26. *2 Chron.* 25. 4. *ch.* 35. 12. So that he cou'd not falsify the Facts; unless we can suppose a whole Generation concurred in a Design to *impose on* Posterity; or were themselves *imposed upon* in plain Objects of Sense. But it is equally absurd to suppose a whole Nation becoming *Knaves* and *Cheats* to their own Children; and to suppose them all *Fools*.

3. The People cou'd not be imposed upon and deceived in these Facts. *Moses* appeals to their Eyes and Ears. *Deut.* 5. 2. *ch.* 6. How bold, and how stupid must a Man be; to what Confusion, and into what Contempt must he be brought, who cou'd appeal to the whole Nation for Works which he and they knew were never wrought amongst them! Cou'd fix hundred thousand People be persuaded to believe they saw the Sea divide, and passed thro' it; heard God's Voice; fed iraculous Bread, &c. if such things ne-

ver happened? Had *Moses* been an Impostor, wou'd he have attempted *such Miracles*; in *such Number*; of so various Sorts; for so long a Time together; by fair Day; and exposed to the Examination of all Men? It cannot be supposed.

4. The *Israelites* were far from being a credulous People, or disposed to an implicit Faith and blind Obedience. They not only examined, but they often dispute, oppose and rebel. At every Turn they are for trying the Strength and Authority of *Moses*. Had he depended on Artifice and Cabals, he had been often confounded. Nothing but the Appearance of God, and Miracles wrought in his Favour gave him his chief Weight with the People. Ex. 15. 22. ch. 16. 3, 20, 27. ch. 17. 4. ch. 19. ch. 20. ch. 24. ch. 32. Num. 11. 1, 14, 26. ch. 14. 7. ch. 16. ch. 17.

5. After the Death of *Moses*, the whole People paid the greatest Regard to his Memory and Laws: And this notwithstanding his History is a most provoking Libel upon every Family in *Israel*, one or two excepted: He records with Infamy the immediate Father of almost every Man then living, at the Time when he wrote; yet they took Care to perform all his Injunctions. Josh. 8. 35. ch. 9. 24. ch. 11. 20. ch. 12. 6. ch. 14. 5. ch. 20. ch. 21. 44. ch. 32. 6, 14. Now wou'd He have tied down the People by so many, so particular, so painful, costly and burdensome Laws, had

had he not been directed of God? Or, would *They* have most religiously observed them all, if not convinced he had Orders from God?

Are not all their Feasts, Fasts, the Pot of Manna, *Aaron's Rod*, Tythes and other Customs so many standing, and as it were *living Witnesses* to the Truth of *Moses's History*? Do not all their following Books, Histories, Songs, Prophecies suppose and confirm the Truth of that *Mosaick History*? And must not all these *Effects* have a proportionate *Cause*? To conclude,

Can Persons duly qualified with Dispositions necessary to Judge of, and be moved by divine Revelations, that is, with a certain spiritual *Gift of Truth*, or Love to it, and with *Uprightness of Heart*, resist all this Evidence?

IV. Q. Which is the fourth Objection?

A. That the *Jewish Law* enjoins such a Number of odd and useless Rites and Ceremonies, that it seems unworthy of God, as it was burdensome to Man.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. The Foundation of the whole Body of the *Jewish Laws* is the Being of ONE GOD, whose Perfections rendered him worthy of Adoration, Love and Obedience; and the grand Design of them is to establish the Belief of one supreme God, and hereby to undermine and root out Idolatry. Their moral Laws relating to their Behaviour to one another

ther, are most excellent, full of Justice and Benevolence. *Deut.* 4, 5, 6, 8. None of their *Ritual* Laws, like those of the Heathens, in-trench on the sacred Rules of *Virtue*, *Purity* and *Decency*. Many of them were designed as a Preservative from *Idolatry*; and to that End are prescribed in direct Opposition to the Laws and Customs of *Egypt*, and their other idolatrous Neighbours. Many of them added Pomp and Solemnity to their Worship; that the Splendor and Decorations of the heathen Worship might have less Force to tempt them into Apostacy. These pompous Ceremonies were also the more proper, as their Worship was, in part; *State Worship*, paid to God as King of *Israel*.

Some of their Rites and Ceremonies were *commemorative* of great and signal Events, worthy of perpetual Remembrance, as Motives to Love, Gratitude and Obedience to God; and also as Means of Love and Friendship one towards another. Others were prescribed with a View to the *Messiah*, and were *Significative* of his Offices, Actions and Benefits; the Expectation of whom was a chief Support to the pious *Jews* in every Age. The whole *Jewish* Constitution being a Shadow of good things to come, as soon as the World was prepared for them; as appears from the Epistle to the *Hebrews*.

Besides; seeing the divine Mission of Moses is fully established, we may conclude, that his

his Laws (tho' all of them are not the *best in themselves*, yet) were *relatively the best*, as fitted to the Temper of that People, and to the State of the World at that Day. Nor is it reasonable to expect, that at this Distance we shou'd be able to account for every single Law.

V. Q. Which is the fifth Objection?

A. That it appears absurd and unaccountably partial, that God, the Father of all Men, shou'd enter into a peculiar Relation to one Family and Nation, and neglect all others, as unworthy of his Notice and Care.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. 1. God gave to all other Nations REASON, (besides the Advantages of Tradition) and our Objectors assert this was sufficient; therefore none were neglected; and if he gave some more than was sufficient, this was surely a Kindness to them, and no Wrong to the Rest,

2. But it will appear, that God's entering into a peculiar Covenant with the Family of *Abraham*, and the Children of *Israel*, is so far from being inconsistent with his universal Dominion over and his paternal Regards to Mankind; that it is a most eminent Mark and Proof of his Care of the whole Human Race; if it be considered.

1) That if God made any Revelations of his Will and Grace to Mankind, some Fam
mil

mily or Nation must be the Receivers and Repositories of these Oracles for the Use of others: and there was no Family more fit for this Trust than the well instructed and disciplined Family of the eminent *Abraham*.

2) That the whole of God's Dispensations to the Family and Descendants of *Abraham* were designed, and visibly fitted to subserve the *general good* of Mankind; as a Means to cure over-spreading Idolatry and Immorality, and to revive, spread, and preserve the true Religion and the Practice of Virtue. *Gen.* 18. 18, 19. *cb.* 22. 18. *cb.* 26. 4. *cb.* 28. 14. *Ex.* 7. 5. *cb.* 9. 16. *cb.* 14. 18. *cb.* 15. 6, 11, 14. *cb.* 18. 1—11. *Lev.* 26. 45. *Num.* 14. 13—16. *Deut.* 4. 6, 8. *Josb.* 2. 9—11. *cb.* 4. 24. *1 Sam.* 17. 46. *1 Kings* 8. 41, 43. *Psal.* 57. 9. *Pf.* 66. 1—5. *Pf.* 98. 1—4. *Jer.* 33. 9.

3) That as this People were placed in a Situation between *Egypt*, *Affyria*, *Chaldea*,—the most remarkable Countries in the World; where their *Example*, as a People who worshipped the One God, and the *Wonders* wrought in their behalf might have most Influence; so their several Transportations from Country to Country, their several Captivities, and their last Dispersion thro' the World seem designed of God, in order to make himself, his Oracles, and his Providence more known; hereby to restore lost Religion, and promote Virtue and Happiness amongst Men. And this End appears to be in some measure answered. *Gen.*

254 *The Christian Catechism.*

20. *ch.* 41, &c. 2 *Chron.* 11. 11, 12. 1 *Kings* 10. 9. *Dan.* 2. 47. *ch.* 3. 29. *ch.* 4. 33, 37. *ch.* 6. 25, 27. *Ezra* 1, 2,—4.

4) That the Separation of this People from the rest of the World answered a farther *general End*, namely, the Preservation of the Prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, the Saviour of Mankind: The Expectation of whom was hereby kept up amongst that People, and also spread thro' remote Nations; and the Marks and Characters by which he might be known were safely kept; which prepared the *Jews* in particular, and in some measure the rest of the World, for the Reception of Christ, when he came as the Saviour of all who believe in him.

VL Q. Which is the sixth Objection?

A. That the internal Constitution of the *Jewish Law* being, in several Parts, of an immoral Nature, cannot be from God; particularly the Law to destroy the *Canaanites*, who had never injured them; and the Law of persecuting Idolaters to Death! whereas the divine and truly humane Methods of dealing with the Erroneous are Argument and Perswasion.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. 1. As to the *Canaanites*; it is an antient Tradition, that the Country of *Canaan* did originally belong to the Israelites, as the Posterity of *Shem*, by virtue of the Division made
amongst

amongst the Sons of *Noah*; that the *Canaanites*, the Children of *Cham* drove them out. *Gen.* 12. 6. *cb.* 14. 1. If so, they had an antient Title, and made good their Claim under *Josua* *.

But not to insist on this; it is sufficient to observe, that the seven Nations of *Canaan*, for their crying and continued Iniquities, were devoted by God to Destruction. God might imploy the Arms of *Israel* to cut them off, as well as any other Instruments of his Justice; to do which they had a clear Commission, and in doing which they had visible Assistance from Heaven; and farther to encourage them, they had an antient Promise of that Country made by God, and oft repeated to their Ancestors. *Gen.* 12. 7. *cb.* 13. 14—*cb.* 15, 18. *cb.* 17. 8. *cb.* 24. 7. *cb.* 26. 3. *cb.* 28. 13. *cb.* 35. 12. *cb.* 48. 21. *cb.* 50. 24. *Ex.* 24. 23, 24, 33. *cb.* 34. 10,—16. *Lev.* 18. 24, 25. *cb.* 20. 22, 24. *Num.* 33. 51—56. *Deut.* 7. 2—5. *cb.* 12. 1—3. *cb.* 20. 10—18. *Josb.* 4. *cb.* 6. *cb.* 10. 8. *cb.* 11. 6, 15, 19. Yet even to these Nations were the *Israelites* to offer Terms of Peace, to live in a State of Servitude, tho' not as Bodies politick, or in a Civil Capacity. *Josb.* 9. 19. *cb.* 11. 19, 20. *Deut.* 21. 10—. But the seven Nations rejected all their Offers.

2. As to thole amongst the *Israelites* who openly served other Gods, and inticed their

* *Epiph. Hær.* 66. No. 84.

MONARCHY, or *FUNDAMENTAL LAW*
Kingdom, which was founded upon a
of *Jehovah* as their God and King;
rected the *Theocracy* as the fittest Me
subvert Idolatry, and pour Contem
all the topical Gods of the Heathen.

And as God foresaw they cou'd
it seems not possible that any *Israelit*
plead Conscience, for either desertin
that God who had done things so g
marvelous for them; or for joining th
ship of other Gods with the worship
when he had so sufficiently shewed
potency and Vanity of the Gods of
tions round them. Nor do we find
ever used by them.

VII. Q. Which is the seventh Obj

vents before they come to pass; if he has wise Ends to serve by over-ruling the Affairs of the World, and executing of his own Purposes; if *He* has a Power to discover, and *Men* have Faculties to understand the Discoveries of these his Purposes; if great and good Ends (such as maintaining Religion in the worst Times; preparing good Men for Trials; supporting their Faith, Patience, and Firmness, during Persecution; keeping up the Belief of a Providence; and keeping Tyrants in awe) can be answered by God's revealing his Purposes beforehand: Moreover, if those to whom Revelations are made have Ways both of making that Revelation known to others, and of proving to them that it is divine;—then Prophetick Revelations are neither impossible nor unreasonable; but not one of the former Points can be disproved, much less all of them.

2. Farther, that if it was a Dispensation becoming God, as a wise Governor and kind Father, to send a Heavenly Teacher amongst Men, to direct them in the Way to eternal Happiness, when they had wandered out of it: If he intended to send so great a Messenger on this Errand, as his own Son, one qualified with Wisdom and Virtue equal to all the Difficulties of his Undertaking; who cou'd consent to leave Heaven, and dwell on Earth; who cou'd indure all Hardships and all Usage from Men; who cou'd defeat all the

Scratagems of Satan, despise all his (counteract all his Policies, sap the Foundation of his Kingdom; who had Abilities to govern the redeemed World, to fortify Souls in their future State, to raise the Dead, and save Mankind;—it was then becoming the Wisdom and Goodness of God to *give Men Notice* of this his merciful Design; and also to *draw* his Picture so much to the Life and Resemblance, that when the Original was brought into View, He might be known and distinguished by it, amongst all upright and disposed Men, who loved and desired to follow the Truth.

Now there was no other but the *Written* Prophecy, or God's communicating his Signs to some Men, that they might communicate them to others, so fit to convey Notices. When God had thus revealed his Designs to Men, who, by his Order, were to reveal them to others; it was highly fit that these important Revelations shou'd be recorded for the Use of future Ages. When Records were made, it was highly fit they shou'd be preserved, and if it was fit they shou'd be kept, it was necessary *Keepers* shou'd be appointed, by Interest, as well as a Sense of Duty, to be obliged to keep them safely. God chose the Family of *Abraham*, and more particularly the Tribe of *Levi*, to be Keepers of these sacred Records; and ordered a Chest or *Tabernacle* to be made for the greater

of the original Records: He also took care to render the *Keepers* and the *Penmen* of his Oracles remarkable and well known in the World by many eminent Distinctions, to draw a more universal, and secure a more lasting Regard to his Oracles.

3. It may be added, as a farther Instance of God's Wisdom and Goodness, that by his Prophetick Oracles amongst the *Jews*, that People were kept from all Pretences to consult the Heathen Oracles; the Vanity and Falshood of which was exposed by the Dignity and Truth of the Oracles of God *.

VIII. Q. Which is the eighth Objection?

A. That the pretended Prophecies of Scripture, and particularly *Daniel's*, are too clear and particular to be real Prophecies, and must be wrote after the Accomplishment, or be a History of past Events.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. This goes upon the absurd Supposition, that God cannot clearly foresee future Events; or, that he cannot enable Men clearly to foretell them.

Besides, the Prophetick Books have the Testimony of the whole *Jewish* Nation for their Antiquity and divine Inspiration; which is surely as valid as the Testimony of the *Romans* in behalf of *Virgil's* Poems: and so

* See *Baxter's* Reasons, chap. 5.

much more valid, as these Books are of more Importance, were more sacredly deposited, and read with greater Veneration.

As to the Book of *Daniel* in particular; it has all the Marks of a Book wrote at the Time when, and by the Person by whom it pretends to be wrote; as 1. The Age and Circumstances of *Daniel* agree to the Time of its supposed Writing. 2. Its Language is correct, pure *Hebrew* and *Chaldee*. 3. It stands clear of every internal Mark of Spuriousness. 4. It is mentioned by the Author of the first of the *Maccabees*, as a genuine Book. 1 *Macc.* 2. 5. by *Josephus* B. 10. Ch. 10. by Jesus Christ. *Mark* 13. 14. And therefore it must be in Being before their Times, and in great Repute as an Oracle of God, or a Book wrote by divine Inspiration; whose Predictions are accomplishing to this Day, in the Prevalency of Christ's Kingdom; and in the Rise and Continuance of the Antichristian Kingdom.

Farther, had this Book been a Forgery, let us ask, 1. How came it to be received into the Canon, and continued there, in the Time of *Ezra*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, *Malachi*? 2. When was it introduced? 3. How came it to obtain so general a Belief and Credit? 4. What Interest cou'd the *Jews* serve by the Admission of *Daniel's* Book? Finally, let the Deists try to make an additional Book to the Christian Canon; and if they succeed, then

it may be believed that a spurious Book was received into the *Jewish Canon* *.

IX. Q. Which is the ninth Objection?

A. That the Books of the old Testament have been so interpolated and corrupted, that it is hard to know which are genuine, original Parts, and which humane Additions.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. By denying the Truth of it. Let the Objectors shew *when*, and *by whom* this was done. It is not pretended to be done by *Christians*, or that the Prophecies concerning Christ have been added by them since the Events; for these Prophecies are found in the Bibles kept by the *Jews*. Had these Books been corrupted by the *antient apostate Jews*, they wou'd have favoured those Idolatries they fell into, and which are every where forbid under so dreadful Penalties. Had they been corrupted by the *modern Jews*, wou'd they not have altered or expunged the Prophecies relating to Christ; which also so plainly foretell their rejecting him, their being rejected of God, and scattered amongst the Nations; and the Call of the *Gentiles* into the Messiah's Kingdom; a Point so abhorred by them. The *pious Jews*, in every Age, have loved the sacred Books too well either to attempt, or to allow of any Corruption in them.

* See Bp. Chandler's, and Mr. S. Chandler's Vindicat. of *Daniel*.

As to the *Books of the Law*, they were never lost, (tho' under idolatrous Kings greatly neglected) as appears *1 Kings* 2. 3. *2 Kings* 18. 6,—12. *1 Chron.* 22. 12. *2 Chron.* 17. 9. *cb.* 23. 18. *cb.* 24. 6. *cb.* 25. 4. *cb.* 30. 16. *cb.* 35. 26. *Isa.* 8. 20. *Ezra* cou'd have no Temptation to alter them; nor, if inclined, cou'd he easily do it. *Ezra* 3. 2. *Neb.* 8. 4.

The *Prophecies* were kept in *Writing*, a great Preservative from Corruption. *Isa.* 3. 8. *cb.* 8. 1. *Jer.* 15. 13. *cb.* 36. 1—27. *Ezek.* 43. 11. *Habak.* 2. 2. These Books were their chief Support under Captivity; they wou'd therefore be diligently read, and taught to their Children; and hereby made incapable of any Alterations. It is certain the *Jews* wou'd never alter them in compliance with the *Chaldees*, who had burned their Temple, laid waste their Country, and held them in Captivity. Nor can any Reason or Motive of Corruption be assigned. After *Synagogues* were multiplied, where these Books were statedly read, it wou'd be still less easy to corrupt them: or after the *Masorites* arose, who were careful to number even the Words and Letters of each Book. There is also an Agreement between the Writings of the *Gentiles*, and those of *Moses* and the Prophets*.

X. Which is the tenth Objection?

* See *Prideaux's* and *Shuckford's* Connect. *Grotius de Veti.*

A. That Christianity being built upon the Prophecies of the old Testament, and these Prophecies being applied to Jesus Christ only in an *allegorical* or mystical Sense, they cannot be real or literal Predictions of Jesus Christ; but must have their Accomplishment in some other Persons; or else be no Predictions at all.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. That this Objection is only an unfair and false Representation of the Case; for the Points following are very clear. 1. That the *Jewish* Writings of the old Testament do uniformly speak of one great Teacher and Saviour, who was to appear in future Time. 2. That there never was any Person besides Jesus Christ, in whom it is so much as pretended that all the Characters have met. 3. That all the antient Characters, tho' seemingly inconsistent with each other, do all literally agree in Jesus Christ. There are literal Prophecies quoted and applied to himself by Jesus Christ, as *Mat.* 26. 31, 54. *Mark* 9. 12. *cb.* 12. 10. *John* 7. 13, 18, 38. *cb.* 15. 25. *cb.* 17. 12. By the Apostles, *Acts* 2. 16. *cb.* 3. 18. *cb.* 10. 43. *cb.* 13. 27, 47. *cb.* 15. 15, 16. *cb.* 17. 3. *cb.* 26. 22, 23. *cb.* 28. 28. 4. That there are Proofs of Christianity independant on the old Testament Prophecies; namely, Christ's Doctrine and Miracles, or his Word and Works; to which Christ and the Apostles constantly appeal. 5. That as it was proper
the

266 *The Christian Catechism.*

He shall be called a Nazarene, a mean, insignificant Person. *Mat.* 2. 23. (5) Sometimes they cite Passages of the old Testament as allowed, certain Principles, in order to argue from them the Truth of the Scripture Doctrine as their natural, necessary Consequences; as *Rom.* 1. 17. or, as Proofs of a disputed Point; as *Ex.* 3. 6. is quoted to that Purpose, *Mat.* 22. 32, &c. (6) The Apostles having by substantial Proofs, evinced the Truth of Christianity; might fairly argue from the allowed Interpretation of the old Testament amongst the *Jews*, as a prudent Means to prevent the ill Effects of their Prejudices, without giving up any Truth: which is called *Argumentum ad hominem*. And to take the Advantage of an Adversaries Concession has never been thought an unfair Way of arguing. *Rom.* 6. 19.

Q. How shall we know when Christ and the Apostles cite the old Testament Passages as proper Predictions, and when not? A. By comparing the old and new Testament together, as we do any two Writings which have a Dependence upon one another*.

XI. Q. Which is the eleventh Objection?

A. That since *Jesus of Nazareth* pretended to be the *promised Messiah*; Christianity

* The old Testament Writings call one Person by the Name of another, whose Spirit and Practise he resembled; as 1 *Chron.* 6. 49. 1 *Kings* 12. 16. *Ezek.* 34. 23. *ch.* 37. 24. *Jer.* 30. 9. *Hos.* 3. 5. *Mal.* 4. 5.

See Chandler's Vind. p. 211. — 360. his Reluct. Proof. and p. 38.

now depends on that Character, as well as on his being a *Prophet* sent from God.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. That we allow it freely: And as Jesus Christ proved he was from God by his Doctrine and Works; so he proved, he was *that Prophet*, the *Messiah*, by the Agreement of ALL the old Testament Characters to him. And his working the Miracles he wrought qualified him to apply the Characters to himself. Tho', had not Jesus Christ taken on him the Character of the *Messiah*, Christianity wou'd have had no Dependance on the Prophecies of the old Testament; as still it has not any natural, intrinsick Dependance.

XII. Q. Which is the twelfth Objection?

A. That Miracles, on which Christians so much rely, have no Relation to Doctrine; nor can prove any Proposition true, much less prove a false Interpretation a true one.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. 1. That Miracles, circumstantiated as Christ's were, give *Authority* to him who worketh them, and are Ground for receiving a Person as a divine Messenger, his Doctrines as true, and his Interpretations as just, when they are agreeable to the Words, to other Prophecies, and to Events.

2. Christ and his Apostles (who knew what they did) appeal to Miracles as Proof of a divine Mission; *John* 5. 36. *Acts* 2. 22. *Rom.* 1.

3. Christianity, in these Texts, is said to be

reported in an *historical* Way) were and *real* *Facts*; but are to be interpreted in an *allegorical* or mystical Sense.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. That this is as impudent and fantastical a Scheme as ever was invented, laden with innumerable Absurdities and palpable Falshoods: for instance, it supposes that Jesus Christ (a Person of eminence and Sanctity) does frequently appeal for Proof of his divine Mission, to Works which he never did; tho' he appeals to their Eyes and Ears.—that the People, when they ask whether the *Messiah* would do greater Miracles than Jesus, mean not *real*, but *imagined* Miracles.—that Jesus sent *John's* Disciples to tell their Master of Cures they had received.—that those converted to Christ un-

Astonishment of the People was wholly groundless.—that the *Jewish* Council were frightened with Shadows, and sat gravely to consult about their own Fancies. And when they persecuted Jesus for healing on the Sabbath-Day, persecuted him for no Action done.—that the Eagerness of the People to make him a King, on the Sight of his Works, was without Foundation, having seen no extraordinary ones done.—that when his Enemies argued, that he did his Works by the Help of *Belzebub*, there were no real Facts done, to drive them to this wretched Shift.—that the lame Man cured by *Peter*, did not either walk or leap; and if he praised God, it was for nothing; that the Council and People were both deceived, in thinking that a *notable Miracle* had been wrought.—that when *Simon-Magus* would have purchased a Power to confer the Holy Ghost, he offered Money for what he had before.—that the People of *Lystra* saw nothing in *Paul* and *Barnabas* more than common, tho' they thought them to be Gods.—that the wonder of all the People at the Apostles speaking in all Languages, was a groundless wonder. Finally, it supposes, that Conversions to Christianity in *Jerusalem*, and in all Nations, were made without the Apostles giving any *real* Proofs of a divine Mission; and so the most amazing Effects were produced without any adequate or proportionable Cause. These and such like are the Absurdities

ties of this Romantick Scheme; which yet Infidelity can swallow and digest*.

XIV. Q. Which is the fourteenth Objection?

A. That notwithstanding all the pretended Evidence Jesus Christ gave of his divine Mission, many of his Brethren, and the Rulers did not believe on him; which doubtless they wou'd have done, had his Proofs been satisfactory.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. That some both of his Brethren, and of the chief Rulers did believe on him; which is a stronger Proof of his divine Mission (as they wou'd never have done it, against the Principles of Education and every worldly Interest, without Evidence) than the Unbelief of others can be of Imposture: in regard their Unbelief may be accounted for, partly by their *Prejudices* against his Person, they knew whence he was; and against his Doctrines and Pretensions, which were cross to their Notions and Expectations; partly by their *Passions* and vile Affections, they *loved the Praise of Men*, and of them sought Glory. Their Unbelief is no Proof, either that Christ's Doctrine was not Excellent; or that he wrought no Miracles to confirm it; his Enemies confess both. John 7. 3, 4, 6. It de-

deserves also to be considered, that the Gospel having Evidence sufficient to convince and persuade Minds *not obstinate*, it is a proper *Touchstone* whereby Mens Dispositions may be tried, whether they be curable or no.

XV. Q. Which is the fifteenth Objection?

A. That the new Testament was not declared canonical by any inspired Men; nor the whole of it by uninspired Men till the seventh Century. Besides many of the Books are *Occasional*, and not wrote as a general and perpetual Rule to Mankind.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. 1. That if Jesus Christ was a real Prophet, sent by God to instruct the World, what he delivered, in the Name of God, is a proper Canon, or Rule of Action.

2. Those Doctrines and Precepts of Christ, if designed as a Rule to Men, when faithfully wrote by those who heard them, and who were assisted in an extraordinary Manner by God, become obligatory, or a Canon to all, in every Age, to whom they come with proper Evidence.

3. If the Apostles were enlightened and assisted by an *unerring Spirit* to lead Men into all Truth necessary to form and preserve the Christian Church; what they taught, under the Influence of that Spirit, was a Canon to those Churches amongst whom they ministered. *Doctrines and Rules of general Concern, are*

fluence of the Spirit; and they carry of Genuineness and Credibility beyond what a studied System would have done without any particular Occasion. As these Pieces were wrote at several Times, were not known to be the Apostles by some Christians; yet when they were known as such, they became Obligatory or a Part of the Canon.

Q. But if Christ and his Apostles had declared any Books canonical, who have a Right to do it?

A. Every Man has this Right, who can show that these Books contain a true Account of the Gospel; and that this Gospel was a Revelation from God.

As to their being declared canonical, we may observe that they could not

If the Evidence of two or three Books being wrote by such Persons was not clear till seven hundred Years after Christ, they cou'd not be declared canonical sooner ; and their being so declared then, shews that *new Evidence* appeared, or the Evidence in being appeared then satisfactory to some, which was not so before. Where the Evidence is less convincing, a proportionable less Degree of Assent to the divine Authority of the Book is due. But the Volume of the new Testament becomes a Canon, not because established by any *humane Authority*, but because written by Persons *authorized and qualified* to be Teachers of the Christian Church.

It is then vain and ridiculous to be nibbling at the Authority of this or that Book. The Point lies here ; Had our Apostles the *Holy Ghost* ? had they the Care of the Churches ? did they write Epistles to them for their Direction and Incouragement ? Are the Books we now have theirs, lesser Errors excepted ?

We do not affirm that every Word is a Rule (as that in 2 *Tim. 4. 13.* about St. Paul's Cloak, and other such occasional Passages, no way relating to Faith and Practise) but as far as they contain the *Gospel of Christ* ; that is, in every thing wherein they can be or ought to be a Rule ; as far as they state or defend its Principles, give and inforce its Precepts. For it is a Supposition exceeding incredible, " that
" God shou'd in so extraordinary a Manner
" rev

“ reveal the Gospel to the Apostles, and yet
 “ leave them at a loss how to Support it; or
 “ leave them to support it by false Argu-
 “ ments *.”

XVI. Q. Which is the sixteenth Objection?

A. That as there was no need of *Inspiration* to write the History of the Things the Apostles saw and heard; so several Marks of Frailty appearing in the Books of the old and new Testament, shew that the Authors of them did not write under the Influence and Direction of an unerring Spirit.

Q. How is this Objection answered?

A. 1. That the Writers of the Scriptures of the old Testament were inspired, or that they wrote by the Direction and under the Influence of the unerring Spirit of God; the Authors or Writers of the new Testament do testify. As, *Rom. 3. 2. Unto the Jews were committed the ORACLES OF GOD.* Mere human Writings deserve not so grand a Character as *Oracles of God.* *2 Tim. 3. 15, 16. All Scripture is given by Inspiration from God, and is profitable, &c.* They were such HOLY Scriptures as *Timothy* had been instructed in, and which were *able to make wise unto Salvation, thro' Faith in Christ.* *Heb. 1. 1. God spoke by the Prophets:* They did not publish

* Chandler's Vindic. chap. 4.

their own Inventions, Conjectures and Reasonings. 2 Pet. 1. 20, 21. *Holy Men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

The Lord Jesus recommends the Writings of the old Testament to our Use. *John 5. 39, 40. Search the Scriptures, for—they testify of me.* If they testified beforehand of Christ, they were wrote by the Inspiration of a foreseeing infallible Spirit. *Luke 16. 29, 31. They have Moses and the Prophets,—if they hear not them, neither would they be persuaded, tho' one rose from the Dead.* Can it be said of any but divine, inspired Writings, that they have more Authority and greater Efficacy than a Message brought by one sent from the other World? *Luke 24. 44, 45. All things must be fulfilled, which are written in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.* All these Books, called in ver. 45. *the Scriptures*, must be wrote by the Assistance of an all-seeing Spirit, otherwise they cou'd not possibly have foretold so many things concerning Christ, so many hundred Years before he appeared.

I may add, it was the Sense of the *Jewish Church*, that their sacred Books were wrote by inspired Men. *Ex. 25. 1.—JEHOVAH spake unto Moses.* *Isa. 1. 1. The Vision of Isaiah, &c.* *Jer. 1. 2. The Word of JEHOVAH came to Jeremiah, &c.* *Psal. 147. 19, 20. He shewed his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgment*

ments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any Nation.*

2. The Lord Jesus promised to his Disciples the Spirit, *to bring all Things* (of Necessity and Importance) *to their Remembrance*; and to *lead them into all Truth*, (necessary to the Ends of their Office, in such Measures, and at such Times as shou'd be necessary) *John 14. 26. ch. 15. 26. ch. 16. 13.* He also promised to indue them with Presence of Mind, and to furnish them with Apologies, when called before Councils. *Mat. 10. 10. Mark 13. 11. It is not ye who speak, but the Holy Ghost. Luke 24. 49. Acts 1. 4, 5. I send you the Promise of my Father. Ye shall be indued with Power from on High—Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

3. We have not only the Promises of a faithful and powerful Saviour; but we have Proof that these Promises of an infallible Spirit to the Apostles were *made good*. For on the Day of *Pentecost*, about ten Days after our Lord's Ascension, the Spirit was poured on the Apostles, and they were indued with miraculous Gifts and Powers: The visible Effects of which were, that they became quite new Men in Understanding, Holiness and Courage. Illiterate Fishermen talk readily in all Languages, with surprizing Address and Bold-

* Amongst the Jews, no one, no not a King, durst assume the Character of an inspired Writer, to whom it did not
Grot. de Verit. L. 1. c. 15.
ng.
ness

ness, before Kings and Councils, with Strength and Clearness of Argument, and upon Facts and Doctrines wholly new*.

Now supposing these Gifts of Knowledge, Prophecy, Interpretation, &c. to be *permanent Habits*; then from this original Fund or Stock of Illumination received at first, the Apostles wou'd be inabled to *preach* and *write* without being liable to any Mistake in Doctrine, Precept or Fact, as far as the Ends of their Office, the Instruction and saving of Souls, required. And tho' in the writing History, of things they saw and heard, there was not the same Necessity of extraordinary Assistance, as in other Cases; yet their Gifts being habitual, and the Spirit's Influence not suspended, or his Light quenched, when writing Matters for which their natural Abilities were sufficient, they may even, in these Cases, be said to write by the Spirit, who had, in so extraordinary a Manner, inlightned them †.

A a

4. In

* *AA*s 2. 3, 4, 5. 1. *Cor.* 2. 4,—16. *cb.* 12. 4, 11, 28, 30. *cb.* 14. 1,—6, 22, 37. 2 *Cor.* 3. 6. *cb.* 6. 4—10. *cb.* 11. 21, 33. *cb.* 12. 2 13. *Gal.* 1. 1. *cb.* 2. 15. *ch.* 3. 2. *Eph.* 3. 5, 6. 1 *Theff.* 4. 8. 1 *Pet.* 1. 10, 11, 12. 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. *cb.* 3. 15, 16 1 *John* 2. 20, 27.

† For the several kinds and Degrees of Inspiration suitable to the several different Occasions for it. See *Smith* of Prophecy.

It wou'd not detract from the Inspiration of the Scriptures, shou'd we except from the extraordinary Influence of the Spi

of free Agents, and which were fulfilled, the Writers must be inspired, foreseeing, unerring Spirit*.

Then as to *Doctrines* and *Precepts* prophets and Apostles (Men of Integrity, who durst not lie) utter the Name of God, and as Commands of Jesus. And many Doctrines of the Covenant the Apostles cou'd know no much less perfectly comprehend the grand System of Christian Truths, a

Spirit, the following Cases. (1) Speeches which concern *common Occurrences of Life*; as *Rom.* 15. 24. *1 Cor.* 16. 7. *2 Cor.* 1. 15, 16. *cb.* 11. 17. *Acts* 7. 16. *cb.* 19. 7. (2) Speeches which concern *human Prudence*; as *1 Cor.* 7. 12, 25, 26. speaks and writes only by the ordinary Assistance of Spirit. (3) Speeches about *Points declared to be*

and write about them with Copiousness, Freedom and Assurance, and in perfect Consistency one with another, except by the Illumination and Assistance of the divine Spirit†.

Several important Doctrines of Christianity, and some Laws, particularly the Abrogation of the *Jewish* Ceremonies, were reserved to the Dispensation of the Spirit; partly, in regard the Apostles themselves were unable at first to bear that Abrogation; and the rest of the *Jews* were much less able; partly, not proper to be preached till after the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, on which Events those Doctrines depended.

As to the *Book of Psalms*, many of these are plainly *prophetical*, as *Psal.* 2. 16. 22. 24. 40. 50. 72. 110. with others, which must be wrote by Inspiration. And the same divine Spirit breathes in the *Devotional* ones; which all pious Men have confessed to be in a strain above all human Composures. The *Jews*, and since them the Christians have constantly used the Psalms as a Part of their Temple, Synagogue and Family Worship; which they

† For Instance, Doctrines concerning the Effects of Christ's Death, his State of Exaltation and Dominion, his Return to Judgment, and the Manner of it; the State of the Dead; the Resurrection and Order of it; the Advocateship of Christ; his giving up the Kingdom to the Father; the Interpretation and Application of the old Testament Types and Shadows

wou'd not have done, had they not thought them compos'd by inspired Men *.

5. There was as much need of the Aids of an unerring Spirit in *Writings* designed for the Perpetual Use of the Christian Church, as in *Preaching* to the Age then present. That the Writings of the new Testament were intended for future Ages, the *Nature of the Case* speaks; for otherwise the Church had been without a Canon. The Being and Benefit of the Church depends upon the Being and Truth of Christ's and the Apostle's Doctrine, which cou'd be preserved only by Writing, as the *Jewish Canon* was.

* 1 Chron. 6. 31, 32. *ch.* 16. 1, 40, 42. *Exra* 3. 10, 11. *Mat.* 26. 30. *Col.* 3. 16. In what Degrees the Spirit of God assisted in composing the *Psalms*, and what was left to the Composer's Invention, is as impossible, as it is needless for us to determine. But it was an Assistance which did not exclude the Use of *natural Faculties*, or *acquired Talents*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 6. St. Paul's arguing in a strong, rational, argumentative Way, is sure no Reason for denying his Inspiration; or that he had the whole Scheme of Christian Truths infused into his Mind by immediate Revelation.



The E N D.

E R R A T A

P. 12. l. 6. for the r. read P. 11. l. 2. with the same

THE TABLE OF THE CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

THE Existence and Perfections of God proved:

SECT. I. Religion defined. God defined. The Being of God not proved by the Scriptures; but by the visible Creation.

SECT. II. Proofs of a God from the Effects to the Cause. Three Postulata. Six ways of proving a God. Three insisted on.

1. The Being and Building of this World proveth a God. Plain Marks of Design in all its Parts. Every Object discovers God to us. The *Earth*, its Matter, Form, Situation, Motion prove a God. *Water*, its Qualities, the Sea, Rivers, prove a God. *Air*, its Properties prove a God. *Fire*. The *Heavens* prove a God. Storms and Thunder no Objection. The *Sea* proves a God. *Birds*, *Beasts*, *Man's Body*; *Man's Soul* prove a God.

2. The general Consent of Mankind proveth a God.

3. Mens. Consciences prove a God.

SECT. III. An Objection, "That the World was Eternal," answered.

SECT. IV. The Perfections of God infinite and absolutely necessary, in six Propositions.

The CONTENTS.

1. God's Eternity proved.
 2. His Independency and Immutability.
 3. His absolute Necessity.
 4. His Immateriality. The material World cannot be God.
 5. The Unity of God.
 6. The Intelligence of God.
- The Being of a God is the Foundation of all rational Satisfaction and Comfort.

C H A P. II.

The Providence of God proved.

SECT. I. Providence defined. Arguments for it from the Nature of God. 1. From his Wisdom. 2. From his Omnipresence. 3. From his Power.

SECT. II. Arguments from the visible World.

- 1st. The Whole is supported, tho' the Parts change.
- 2d. From the Political World.
- 3d. From remarkable Distinctions between the Righteous and Wicked ; or from the moral World.
- 4th. From Miracles and Prophecies;
- 5th. From the Dependence of great Things on small ones.

SECT. III. Objections against Providence answered.

1. Three Objections against the Sovereignty of Providence.
2. Three—against the Wisdom of Providence.
3. Four—against the Holiness of Providence.
4. Five—against the Justice of Providence.
5. Eleven Objections against the Goodness of Providence.

C H A P. III.

Proofs of the Immortality of the Soul.

SECT. I. Conscious Life essential to the Soul.

SECT. II. Arguments from the Nature of the Soul.

1. The Soul is a distinct Being from the Body. It considers the Body ; moves it ; hath a distinct Interest from it ; has a common Sensibility ; remains intire when the Body is maimed, and loseth several Parts.

An Objection answered.

2. The Soul is not material.

All Matter does not think.

Thought

The CONTENTS.

Thought cannot arise from any Mode of Matter.

The Faculties and Actions of the Soul are far above Matter; shewed in several Instances.

The Arguments put into logical Form.

3. The Soul is one, indivisible, living Being. Consciousness considered.

SECT. III. Moral Proofs of the Soul's Immortality.

1. From the Perfections of God. It is unreasonable to suppose God will extinguish rational Beings. It is inconsistent with his Wisdom, Justice, Goodness, Holiness.

2. From the Office and Powers of Conscience.

3. From Mens Desires, Expectations and growing Fitness.

4. From Mens Hopes and Fears.

5. From the Importance of this Doctrine to Mens Interests.

6. From the universal Belief of it.

7. From the Testimony of the Scriptures.

8. From the Absurdity of the Doctrine of Annihilation.

C H A P. IV.

Proofs of a future Judgment.

SECT. I. 1st. Argument. Man, in his Nature and Condition, is an accountable Being. God is a moral Governor. Virtue is rewardable, Vice punishable.

2d. Arg. From the Being and Powers of Conscience:

3d. Arg. From the Wisdom, Justice, Holiness, Goodness of God.

4th. Arg. From the absurd Consequences of the Supposition, that there will be no future Judgment. *Lucian's Parable.*

5th. Arg. From the Necessity of it to clear up Providence.

SECT. II. Reasons for one general, publick Day of Judgment.

C H A P. V.

The Truth and divine Authority of the Christian Revelation.

SECT. I. Four Religions, *Mahometan, Jewish, Pagan, Christian.*

Reasons for not being a *Mahometan.*

SECT. II. Reasons for not being a *Jew.*

Remarkable Particulars concerning the Jews.

SECT. III. Reasons for not being a *Pagan.* Or, The Need

The CONTENTS.

Necessity and Usefulness of divine Revelation; As it sets great *Truths* in the clearest Light. As it giveth the plainest *Rules* of Practice. As it inforcech these by the strongest *Motives*.

Hinderances to Mens forming a just Scheme of Religion without Revelation. Great are the Advantages of such a Scheme ready drawn up, and supported with divine Authority.

How far God and his Will may be known by the right Use of Mens natural Faculties.

God as Rector and Judge will deal with Men according to their Behaviour. As Proprietor and Benefactor he may bestow his free Gifts as his Wisdom directs. An Evil Being having gained an Ascendancy over Mankind makes a divine Interposition more needful. Christians have great Advantages above Indians. The *Law* and the *Light* of Nature distinguished. How far Reason is a sufficient Guide. The Sufficiency of Reason no Argument against the Usefulness of Revelation. Advantages of Revelation from Mr. *Reinolds*. Bars to the right Use of Reason.

SECT. IV. The Necessity of Christ's Coming: Or, Reasons for being a *Christian*.

Six ends of Christ's Coming.

1. To lead Men to the Knowledge of God.
2. To give a plain, well assisted Rule of Life.
3. To propound powerful Motives to Holiness.
4. To teach Men how to worship God.
5. To assure Men of Assistance from God.
6. To offer to God an acceptable Sacrifice in an obedient Life and Death.

SECT. V. The Necessity and Usefulness of Teachers in Subordination to Jesus Christ. The Gentile Philosophers, on many Accounts, disqualified for this Office.

SECT. VI. Marks of a Religion coming from God found in the Christian Revelation.

1. Its *Doctrines* are agreeable to Reason. A List of the Christian Doctrines. Objections against the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body answered.
2. Its practical Duties are consonant to our natural Notions of God, are perfective of Men, and conducive to their Happiness. The Usefulness of Positive Institutions.

The CONTENTS.

3. Its *Motives* are proper and powerful.
4. The *Manner* in which Duty and Virtue are recommended; and in which Religion is to be propagated, is worthy of God, and suitable to Men.

SACR. VII. Positive Proofs of the Truth and divine Original of the Christian Religion.

I. There was such a Person as Jesus Christ.

II. He wrought uncontestable Miracles. The Nature of Miracles opened. The Characters and Circumstances of the Miracles of Christ. Rules by which to Judge of Miracles.

III. God wou'd never have concurred with and supported an Impostor. Much less have raised him from the Dead. The Miracles of Christ not wrought by the Assistance of evil Spirits.

The Resurrection of Christ proved.

The Evidence of it is recorded by a great Number of credible Writers. The Report of it obtained early Credit amongst Men of all Ranks.

This Evidence consisted, in escaping out of his Grave, when covered, sealed, and guarded; in his being seen and conversed with forty Days, by great Numbers; in his inducing his Apostles with miraculous Gifts and Powers; and giving them great Success.

Objections to Christ's Resurrection answered.

1. That a Resurrection is against the Course of Nature.
2. That Christ appeared only to chosen Witnesses.
3. That he arose before the predicted Time.
4. That the Disciples stole him away.
5. That it was only an airy Spectre which appeared.
6. Some of the Witnesses were only weak and frightened Women.
7. That one Fact cannot prove another.
8. That at this Day we have no living Witnesses to attest the Fact.
9. That the Disciples might be Enthusiasts.
10. That most Countries had the Testimony of only a single Apostle.

IV. The Prophecies of the old and new Testament have had an exact Accomplishment.

A List of those Prophecies.

V. The Gospel of Jesus Christ had such Success and Power

The CONTENTS.

that great Numbers, in the first and following Ages, have for Christ. Four great Disadvantages attended the first publishing of the Gospel. Upright Men may die in defence of *Errors*, but not to attest *Facts*, known to be false.

VI. The new Testament contains the Revelation of by Jesus Christ; is a credible History; and the Writer an Extraordinary Inspiration from God. What Book canonical. Marks of genuine Writings all found in the Testament. Characters of the Founder of Christianity, his Associates, from Mr. *Reinolds*. Proofs of the Inspiration of the Apostles. Evil Spirits, or Evil Men not the Authors of the Scriptures. Good Men the *Writers*, not the *p* *Authors* of the new Testament. A Summary of the Evidence for Christianity, from Mr. *Lardner*.

SECT. VIII. Excellencies of the Christian Religion.

I. As to its Author. Who was indued with the Spirit of Power, Wisdom, Love.

II. As to its Nature.

It is suitable { to the Perfections of God,
to the Office of a Redeemer;
to the Case of a sinful World.
to the Case of a redeemed World:

III. As to its Tendency and Influence; which is
on the Mind of Man.

Excellent { on Societies.

on our Preparation for Death.

IV. As to its general Properties. Twelve eminent ones.

C H A P. VI.

Objections against Revelation in general, and against Christian Revelation in particular, stated and answered.

1. *Objection*. The sufficiency of Reason.

Ans. Granting the bare Sufficiency of Reason does not overthrow the Usefulness and Benefit of Revelation. The Methods used by the Defenders of the Sufficiency of Reason. Several Presumptions against them.

2. *Objection*. That *Moses* was not the Author of the *Law* which go under his Name.

Ans. The sacred Writers, and the whole Jewish Nation attest he was. They have all the Marks of genuine Writing. The few Additions made by later Prophets is no Argument against *Moses's* being the chief Author of them.

The CONTENTS.

3 *Object.* *Moses* had not divine Authority.

Ans. The Proofs he gave of it were as strong as cou'd well be given; both Miracles and Prophecies.

4 *Object.* The unusual and useless Ceremonies of the *Jews* wu'd not be from God.

Ans. The Authority of *Moses* being established, the *Jews*' Laws must be divine. They are opposed to the idolatrous customs of the Countries round them; or are Commemorative of great Events; or Significant of moral Duty; or typical of a future and more perfect Dispensation of Religion under the Messiah.

5 *Object.* God's entering into a Covenant of Peculiarity with the *Jews* is unaccountable.

Ans. To account for it is not difficult; in regard, it was a proper Means to abolish Idolatry; to make God known to the World; to establish proper Keepers or Depositories of God's Oracles; and to distinguish the People amongst whom the most remarkable and eminent Prophet and Saviour was to arise.

6 *Object.* The Immorality of the *Jewish* Law, in the case of the Slaughter of the *Canaanites*, and of putting to death Idolaters.

Ans. It was God who employ'd the Arms of *Israel* to root out an incurable Nation; and gave them a well attested Commission to do it. And Idolaters in *Israel* were Rebels and Traitors, who forfeited all Right to live in *Canaan*; and who cou'd scarce possibly be sincere and conscientious Converts to Idolatry.

7 *Object.* Prophecy is an unreasonable Dispensation.

Ans. If God foresee all Events, it is wise and kind in him to foretel such as Men have a great Interest in. It tends to convince Men of a Providence, to support good Men, and deter the Wicked; and answers many other great Purposes.

8 *Object.* The Book of *Daniel* foretells Events with too much Clearness to be a Prophecy.

Ans. So that it seems either Darkeness or Clearness will furnish ill minded Men with an Objection to Prophecy, as best serveth a present Turn. But this Book has all internal and external Marks of a Book wrote at the Time when it professes to be wrote, and by the Author whose Name it bears.

9 *Object.* The Scriptures are corrupted.

The CONTENTS.

Ans. This cannot be proved as to any material Point: and there is Evidence to the Contrary.

10 *Object.* The Prophecies in the old Testament are applied to Christ only in an allegorical Sense.

Ans. This is an unfair and false Account. Numerous Prophecies are literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Yet other Scriptures may be applied by way of Accommodation, as fitting other Events than those first described.

11 *Object.* That Christianity depends upon Christ's being not only a *Prophet*, but the *Prophet* foretold in the antient Oracles.

Ans. It is allowed. And Christ claimed, and supported his Claim to both these Characters.

12 *Object.* That Miracles have no Relation to Doctrine.

Ans. They are a proper and convincing Proof of the Authority of the Preacher, and consequently of the Truth of his Doctrine.

13 *Object.* Christ's Miracles were not real Facts.

Ans. None but wild Enthusiasts can seriously make such an Objection.

14 *Object.* Why did not the *Jewish* Priests and Rulers believe in Christ?

Ans. For the same Reason which keeps all vicious, worldly Hypocrites from becoming sincere Converts.

15 *Object.* The Books of the new Testament have not been declared Canonical by any inspired Writer.

Ans. It is sufficient that they were wrote by the Disciples of Christ, who had an extraordinary Measure of the Spirit promised to and conferred upon them.

16 *Object.* There was no need of Inspiration to write the History of what they saw and heard.

Ans. There was need of divine Illumination to deliver infallibly the Christian *Doctrine*; and a special Degree of Inspiration for *Prophecy*; and in reporting *historical Facts* the Spirit was promised to bring all needful Things to their Remembrance.

F I N I S.







1914

1914

1914

1914

